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THE BOOK OF JOB,

WITH NOTES,

CRITICAL, EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL,

DESIGNED FOR BOTH PASTORS AND PEOPLE.

With a New Translation Appended.

BY

REV. HENRY COWLES, D. D.

“Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I except some man should guide me?”—ACTS VIII : 30, 31.

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PREFACE.

THROUGH all the ages this book of Job has been dear to the most gifted minds and to the noblest hearts. Its high antiquity, antedating all other books extant; its poetry, unsurpassed in beauty and sublimity; its appeal to man's deepest sympathies through its recital of sufferings so keen yet so mysterious; and the ever-living interest which human bosoms must feel in its great problems—all these elements conspire to give this book imperishable interest. Of course these features of the book avail to justify any worthy effort to throw light upon its historic questions, interpret its language, bring out its moral purposes, and so place its great moral lessons within easy grasp.

This grouping of aims will suffice to indicate the points to which my labors have been specially directed. I have sought to locate the book in chronology and history; to throw light on the question of its authorship; to show how the leading minds of that early age struggled and stumbled over the great problem of the sufferings of apparently good men, and how the Lord himself brought this great problem to issue in what we must regard as the ultimate and supreme moral purpose of the book.

Quite aside from my method in previous volumes, I have appended to this a new translation, hoping in this concise form to give the reader a general view of the drift of thought and of the beauty of style which appear in the original. For many nicer shades of meaning and for a more full presentation of the argument and its bearings, the reader must

be referred to the Notes.—Our received English version of Job, while in many passages it is most admirable, is in some, sadly imperfect.

With this small volume on Job, the author's work on the Old Testament is completed. The foregoing historic books in two volumes; the subsequent poetic books in two; and the prophetic in four—fill out this portion of the Sacred Scriptures.—Under a sense of manifold imperfections, alleviated only by the consciousness of honest purpose and earnest endeavor, the author brings this long labor to its close, hopeful subordinately that it may find favor with many who love the Sacred Word, but chiefly and supremely that it may be accepted of Him whose love and wisdom have given us these ancient and priceless treasures.

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INTRODUCTION.

ITS NATURAL DIVISIONS.

THIS remarkable book, bearing the name of Job, is quite unique in character, unlike any other book of the Bible, being neither history nor prophecy; neither songs of devotion nor maxims of wisdom; neither memoirs of Christ, nor apostolic letters to the churches,—a book therefore which has no analogy with any other one embraced in our Sacred Scriptures. Its manifestly high antiquity and its magnificent poetry, coupled with the profound and rational interest always felt in the great questions of God's moral government—the problems of this book—combine to bring it very near the hearts of thoughtful men of all generations and to commend it to most careful attention and thorough study.

As helpful to such study, I propose by way of *introduction* to treat:

- I. *Of its natural divisions;*
- II. *Of its historic basis;*
- III. *Of the country and age of its historic events;*
- IV. Of its author and of the admission of the book into the Hebrew sacred canon;
- V. Of the work done by the author;
- VI. Of its moral design and purpose.

I. Of the *natural divisions* of the book. Of these, there are five:—(1) An introduction (chap. 1 and 2) which gives a brief personal history of Job; his family; residence; position in society, great wealth and exemplary piety. Next occurs a remarkable conversation between the Lord and Satan concerning Job's piety—which resulted in the Lord's giving Satan permission to put Job to the test under most

severe affliction. Then follows a detailed account of calamities falling on Job, which stripped him of his property, bereft him of his children, tormented him with painful and loathsome disease, and apparently left nothing to him but a suffering existence.

(2) Next, three friends come to visit him who hold and represent the doctrine that all suffering in this life is punitive, retributive; that the good or evil sent of God upon men is in point of justice perfect according to their good or ill deserts, and consequently by inevitable inference, that great sufferers have been great sinners. These friends are, therefore, very sure that Job, despite of the strongest professions and fairest appearances of piety, is a great hypocrite, whose hypocrisy God is exposing, and whom, as friends of God and of Job also, they are bound to expose; to convict him of his sin and bring him if possible to repentance. We have their successive speeches and Job's replies in the second division of the book (chap. 3-31.)

(3) Another disputant appears, a young man Elihu, who gives his opinion of the case, mainly reviewing the words and spirit of Job—in six chapters (32-37.)

(4) Next the Almighty himself appears; addresses Job at considerable length; whereupon Job humbles himself deeply before the Lord; is forgiven and restored. The Lord also passes his judgment upon Job's three friends, etc. (chap. 38-42: 1-6).

(5) The conclusion records the issue as to Job's three friends and his own subsequent prosperity (42: 7-17).

II. Some critics have denied all historic basis to this book, claiming that what purports to be historic fact is wholly the author's fiction—purely ideal and never actual. They justify the author in representing the persons in his dialogue as historic men, on the ground that this course naturally heightens the reader's interest in the discussions.—The critics referred to rest their position on two grounds:—(a) The alleged improbability that such a series of fearful calamities should fall in so rapid succession upon one man: (b) That the part borne by Satan has far more the air of fancy than of fact. How, it is asked, can the things affirmed of Satan be supposed to have been real; and even if they had been, how could the writer know what transpired in that meeting of "the sons of God" into which Satan obtruded himself?

Reserving the case of Satan for future consideration, in order to discuss first the more vital question as to Job, I am

induced to regard him as a real character, a veritable historic personage by the following considerations:

1. The points of Job's case are given with very great minuteness as those of a real history.

2. The agencies which brought upon him his afflictions and all the points set forth as history, correspond with the well known circumstances of that country and age—*e. g.*, his great wealth in cattle, the usage of birth-day festivals among married sons and daughters; the predatory incursions of Sabceans and Chaldeans; the terrific destructiveness of lightnings and tornadoes; and the plague of leprosy with which Job was smitten.

3. Subsequent sacred writers speak of Job as a real, not a fictitious person; *e. g.*, Ezekiel in chap. 14: 14–20, and James in chap. 5: 11. In Ezekiel the words are those of the Lord himself: "Though these three men" (all equally assumed to be real men) "Noah, Daniel and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness." These men are adduced as notable examples of prevailing prayer in behalf of others, and perhaps of that exemplary righteousness, because of which God spares the guilty as he would have spared Sodom if a few such men had been in it. This assumes that they were real, not fictitious men.—We must make the same inference from the words of James: "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."

4. In the progressive development of literature, the age of Job and of his author also, was far too *early* for works of fiction. The earliest writings were genealogical, soon shading off more or less into historical. These forms of literature met man's earliest and most urgent demands. Fiction belongs exclusively to a far later age. This doctrine is on the one hand inferable from the laws of mind, and on the other, is sustained by the facts of history. In the progress of literary culture, poetry came early, but fiction late—never until authorship became an art.

No argument in favor of regarding the story of Job as fiction can be drawn from the parables of the New Testament, for these differ widely from the apparent facts in the history of Job. The points made in the parables do not purport to be real history. They are simply supposed cases, set forth for the avowed purpose of illustrating great truths pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Turning now to the objections made to the historical character of the book, I grant that the quick succession of such fearful calamities upon one man is extraordinary—but it is not impossible, and therefore not incredible. The history represents it as extraordinary—a very special case—and gives the special reason, viz.: a point at issue between God and Satan, and a special permission given of God to this great “accuser of the brethren” to try his hand in testing the question of Job’s unselfish piety.—Now if there be a devil (as the Scriptures every-where assume); if he has certain powers over the human mind and the physical world which he can wield with God’s permission; if he has a certain range for his activities in this sinning world; if moreover he hates all righteousness and dreads its influence, and therefore loves to traduce the reputation of all good men so that his devilish spirit makes him naturally an “accuser of the brethren”;—then there is nothing incredible—nothing even improbable in the statements made here as veritable history.

It deserves to be specially noted that Satan’s character and work as put here are in fullest accord with the numerous allusions made to him throughout the Scriptures. He is the same “old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world”; whom John of Patmos saw in vision, and with an eye on these chapters of Job, calls “the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before God day and night” (Rev. 12: 9, 10); the same “old serpent” who entered Eden and there began his work of deception and lies; whom Jesus describes as a murderer from the beginning (John 8: 44); and styles “the prince of this world” (John 12: 31); and of whom he said to Peter—“Satan hath desired to have thee that he may sift thee as wheat”—(even as he sifted Job); whom Peter knows as “your adversary the devil”; a “roaring lion, walking about seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5: 8); and whom Paul knows as “the god of this world, blinding the minds of them that believe not” (2 Cor. 4: 4); as “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2: 2). Nor can it be said with any force that the age of Job was too early in the progress of religious thought for such views of Satan, for, early as I admit the age of Job to have been, *Eden was yet earlier*, and its traditions, if not even its written history, may be plausibly assumed to have gone abroad over the East ere this time.—Moreover, if it be still objected

that Satan's appearing among "the sons of God" is quite too strange for fact, it may be replied that we know but little yet of the spiritual world which lies outside the range of our bodily senses; and further still, that other cases of analogous sort appear in Bible history, as the reader may see in 1 Kings 22: 19-23, and Zech. 3: 1, 2.

Finally, if the point be pressed—How could the writer of this book know what transpired at this meeting of Satan among "the sons of God" and especially the ensuing conversation between Satan and the Lord? it scarcely need be said that he does not claim to have been present as a witness. Our alternative, therefore, is—inspiration, or mere drapery, a costume suggested by fancy to represent truthful relations. Those who admit inspiration at all in the writing of Scripture will have not the least difficulty in assuming inspiration here. And if we may suppose the writer familiar with the record of the scenes in Eden, we shall not look for any startling surprise in his mind upon learning that Satan is equal to such impudence toward God and such malignity against good men as these revelations of that conversation imply.

This group of facts and considerations seem to me to justify the doctrine of a real historic basis for this Book of Job.

III. *The country and age of these historic events:*

The country is definitely named—"the land of Uz" (1: 1). The precise location and boundaries of this land are in dispute; but all agree to locate it in Arabia, north and east of Edom, eastward of the old kingdoms of Moab and Ammon; but how far east toward the Euphrates is the special point of disagreement among the best geographical authorities. Beyond all doubt it was the land early and long held by the descendants of Abraham other than the children of the covenant through Isaac;—viz: through Ishmael, Keturah, and Esau.—It should be suggested that all the allusions of the book to the external world—to climate and atmospheric agencies; to productions, animals, modes of living, customs of society, etc., etc., are in keeping with this country and with these populations.

As to the age—the time-period—of these historic events, our data enable us to approximate it sufficiently for all practical purposes; while yet we must fail of entire precision. We test it by the great longevity of the patriarch, in applying which to the diminishing scale of the average human life, we ought perhaps to make some allowance for an old age exceptionally long and prosperous. In approximating Job's

entire age, the first period, prior to the scenes of this book, is a matter of estimate. We may assign at least fifty years for raising a family of ten children (apparently of one mother). To this we add one hundred and forty (42: 16) for the second stage subsequent to his great affliction, making one hundred and ninety—which classes him with Abraham, 175 (Gen. 25: 7), and Isaac, 180 (Gen. 35: 28).

Another element of calculation comes in with the force of considerable probability from the supposed identification of some of the various parties whose names appear in this history. We have "Eliphaz" whose name is given as the son of Esau (Gen. 36: 4, 10); "Bildad the Shuhite", whose appellation, "the Shuhite," may connect him with Shuah, the sixth son of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. 25: 2); also "Elihu the Buzite"—whose family designation may indicate him as descended from "Buz", a son of Nahor (Gen. 22: 21), and so, a nephew of Abraham.—These friends were contemporary with the early stage of Job's life.—If this identification be reliable we must place Job as late as the age of Jacob and Joseph. This may be regarded as our nearest approximation, and is sufficiently near for all practical purposes.

Let it be borne in mind that the time-period of Job's life by no means determines the date of the book—the time when it was written. The historic facts may have remained unwritten through one or more generations. This great discussion, set forth with the rich embellishments of oriental poetry, may have waited, we know not how many years, for a writer to arise competent to produce and disposed to attempt such a work. The *date of the author* is therefore an independent question which naturally comes up next for our consideration.

IV. *The author of Job and its admission into the canon of Hebrew Scriptures.*

My reasons for grouping these two points under this one general head will appear presently.

The elements of this problem of authorship may be arranged thus:

1. *Capability.* The number of men since the world began capable of writing the Book of Job, has been by no means large; the number of such men within the period in which this book must have been written was very small indeed. The writer of this book was certainly a man of the highest order of mental and literary ability—one of a class which in

the history of our world has been exceedingly small in the most favored ages, while many an age has failed of its single man upon this exalted level.*—This point should be allowed more weight than is currently accorded to it. It bears with great force against the favorite theory of many modern critics, that this author was some "*great unknown*," living in Israel between Samuel and Jeremiah. This theory encounters in the outset one stubborn improbability, viz.: that a man of such powers *could be unknown*. A "*great unknown*" is essentially a solecism—a proposition whose absurdity is self-demonstrated. The world always has work for such men, and their works can not be hid. They are too few to be spared from the world's highest necessities—too great to be unknown. The theory is sometimes convenient to help out a foregone conclusion—convenient because it seems not easily refuted. If these critics would name their man—David, Solomon, Nathan, Asaph;—then we might have means of sifting, testing, disproving, the theory; carrying our search into the known qualities of these supposed candidates, and so exploding each distinctly proposed hypothesis.—My inference from these considerations is that if the author of Job were a Hebrew, one of the race of Israel, living among his own people, we must find him among the *known* and not the *unknown* names of their history.

At this stage of our inquiry, it will be helpful for many reasons to advance a definite theory as to the name of the author. It will help to illustrate our points of evidence and

* Froude speaks of Job as a "book of which it is to say little to call it unequaled of its kind, and which will one day, perhaps, when it is allowed to stand on its own merits, be seen towering up alone, far away above all the poetry of the world." ("Short Studies on Great Subjects," p. 231.)

Carlyle (On Heroes, p. 45) says:—"Apart from all theories about it, I call the Book of Job one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble book: all men's book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending problem—Man's destiny, and God's ways with him here in this earth. And all in such free-flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity; its epic melody and repose of reconciliation."

"Such living likenesses were never since drawn. Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation, oldest choral melody as of the heart of mankind;—so soft and great; as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars! There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit."

may thus conduce toward a reliable conclusion. It ought of course to be understood that a theory proposed as to the name of the author is not of itself proof. It is only a supposition—to be confirmed or not confirmed as the points of real proof may bear upon him. Let it then be *supposed* that the author was *Moses*.

Moses was equal to the authorship of this book. No competent critic has ever questioned his ability to write the Book of Job. The man who was skilled in all the wisdom of Egypt; who enjoyed through forty years the training of the reputed son of Pharaoh's daughter; at the court of the most cultured nation of the ancient world; the man who could write that glorious triumphal song (Ex. 15: 1-19) over Pharaoh's hosts gone down as a stone into the Red Sea waters; or those words of sublimest poetic power which fill two chapters in his Deuteronomy (32 and 33), the closing paragraph of which (33: 26-29) has scarcely its equal in all human literature for beauty, sublimity and grandeur—this man it is safe enough on the score of original talent or acquired culture, to name as the author of the Book of Job.

2. The language and style of the book supply another element bearing upon this problem of authorship.—The critics versed in questions of this nature concur in general if not even universally that the Book of Job is written in pure Hebrew, and that it certainly does not belong to the later but to the earlier age of Hebrew literature. My own reading of the book has impressed me with these two peculiarities:—(a) The large number (relatively to other extant Hebrew) of rare words (the “*apax legomena*” of the critics); and (b) The frequent occurrence of words upon which important light is thrown from the corresponding words in Arabic—a cognate language. The latter point favors the supposition that the book was written in Arabia, or at least, by one familiar with the Hebrew as then spoken in their country.—I scarcely need say that these points favor the theory that Moses was the author.

3. Still other elements for this problem of authorship lie in his *allusions* to the country, and to whatever in it is present to his eye, or indeed open by any means to his knowledge. It is simply inevitable that a writer should draw his illustrations—also his words and phrases—from things known, and not from things unknown. Thus his work will show with a fair measure of certainty *where* he lived and what his surroundings were. We shall better appreciate the nature and

force of this class of facts if we bear in mind that every author writes for somebody to read—commonly for the people among whom he lives.

Now this book shows on every page a thorough familiarity with north-eastern *Arabia*, and to nearly an equal extent, with *Egypt*. We find here Arabian life in every point—people living in tents, with property in cattle only. We have here largely the animals of the desert; also the climate, the storms, and the diseases of that country. The only form of idolatry referred to is the worship of the heavenly bodies, and this was “a crime to be punished by the judges”—indicating a period of very high antiquity.—Of the author’s references to points known to be Egyptian, we may specify—the light vessels of papyrus (9 : 26); the Nile grass, under its well-known Egyptian name (8 : 11); the Nile-horse or hippopotamus (40 : 15–24); the crocodile (leviathan) (41 : 1–34); the usages of civil courts (9 : 14–16, 32, 33 and 13 : 18, 19, 22 and 14 : 15) particularly, indictments in writing (13 : 26 and 31 : 35) and perhaps the use of advocates at law (9 : 33–35); a whole chapter on mining (28 :) for which we must find the basis in Egypt or Arabia—certainly not in Palestine.—This enumeration is very incomplete, to be taken merely as a specimen. A complete list would quote a great part of the allusions of this class in the book.—The reader will note particularly that while the scenes and circumstances of the book are located in Arabia, making it substantially certain that the author lived there and wrote this book there, it is yet about equally certain that he *had lived in Egypt*. His entire familiarity with Egyptian life and surroundings leave no reasonable doubt on this point. You can not find that he has lived in Canaan, in Syria, or on the Euphrates—much less still, in any more remote countries of Asia, Africa or Europe.—Now obviously, when we have narrowed down our problem to some one man who has lived in Egypt and in Arabia, writing his book in the latter country, it is plain that we must be about ready for the positive inference that the author was Moses.

4. There is a negative side to this argument, viz., in the points *NOT alluded to*. Here the one comprehensive fact is the entire *absence of whatever is properly of Palestine*—the land of Canaan. The author of Job makes no allusion to a thing—none to a single object in nature—which is peculiar to Canaan as distinct from Arabia and Egypt—if we except the river Jordan (40 : 23) which as a rapid torrent in its flood

season was the only illustration accessible for either of these three countries—Egypt, Arabia or Canaan, and therefore is not distinctively Palestinian. Passing this, we find in Job no allusion to the cedars of Lebanon, none to the oaks of Bashan, nor to the palm-tree, the pomegranate, the olive; none to the vale of Sharon, nor to the beauty of Carmel. The threshing-floor and the wine-press appear abundantly in the poetry of Canaan; but with only a single exception—a rather obscure notice—of each (40: 30 and 24: 11) are not here.

Let it be considered that every poet depends on his outward world for the materials of his imagery. In this outer world he lives, sees, feels, and develops his imagination. Hence his allusions to nature are an index to the country he lives in—an index which determines his locality with a sort of proof little short of demonstration. Any reader with ordinary habits of attention will see the fact of which I speak if he will compare the book of Job with the Psalms, or with Proverbs, or the Song of Solomon, or with Isaiah, Hosea or Amos. Such comparison will bring him at once to the conclusion that the writer of Job did not live in the same country with David and Asaph, with Solomon and Isaiah, with Hosea and Amos. He will be forced to this conclusion by the evidence coming from this one point of comparison, viz., their respective allusions to the external world as the source of poetic imagery and illustration.

But there are other points of comparison. Every writer of the land of Canaan after Joshua shows in his writings that he knows of the Mosaic law; knows the scenes of the Exodus, of the wilderness, of the planting of his people in the goodly land of promise. His religious ideas take their type—not mainly from the fields of nature—the great works of God in the material universe; but largely from the history of his own people and from the system of worship God had given them. —Over against this, the author of Job moves and thinks in the sphere of natural religion almost exclusively. Traditionally, he knows of the creation and the flood; there is no evidence that he then had the written records of those events. Sacrifices and the worship of the heavenly bodies appear in his book; but sacrifices in their general form were every-where in those early ages and were not confined by any means to the people of Israel. In their more minute Mosaic forms—stated festivals, an organized priesthood; tithes and most diversified offerings—they appear every-where in the poetry

of Canaan, but are not found in Job.—Is it replied to this that a writer of Palestine in the period between Saul and the exile, having laid his plot in Arabia, would study to make all the points in his drama correspond to the assumed locality of his actors, and so would avoid all allusions to what was distinctively Palestinian?—The answer is—(a) That such an undertaking is immensely difficult; so difficult that it is doubtful whether it has ever been successfully accomplished; and (b) That the supposition of such a purpose is utterly at war with the honesty and simplicity of the inspired oracles. That a prophet of God, living in the land of Israel should labor in this way to ignore his own home and country, and write a book *as if he were of Arabia*, and were adapting his book primarily for Arabian readers, is too revolting, too unnatural, too utterly improbable, to be accepted. No critic could look with favor upon such an assumption unless he were hard pushed to find support for a foregone conclusion. The idea of a Hebrew prophet in Palestine getting up a debate on the deep questions of divine providence, and clothing it with poetic attractions for the purpose of alluring readers in Arabia or Edom, is most preposterous.—If, on the other hand, he wrote for his countrymen, how could he utterly ignore his nation's history, his nation's religion and worship? How could he be dumb in the presence of Baal-worship; the burning of sons and daughters in homage of the gods of Moab and Ammon; the awful apostasies of his people into gross idolatry, while he had words of condemnation for kisses thrown by the hand to the sun and the moon (31 : 26-28)? Is it in any wise credible that a good and true prophet of Jehovah—one capable of writing the book of Job—should be so utterly oblivious to every thing that made up the surrounding *present* of his life, and for no obvious cause should throw himself into an ideal present in Arabia to produce such a book, supposably to send on a mission into the unknown East?*

The reader will see that we have made important progress toward the solution of our problem if we have substantially settled this—that he was *not at home* in the land of Canaan. This rules out the current theory of some "Great Unknown"

* Froude recognizes some of the points above put, though he suggests no hypothesis to account for them:—in these words: "Unjewish in form and in fiercest hostility with Judaism, it hovers like a meteor over the Old Hebrew literature, in it, but not of it, compelling the acknowledgment of itself by its own internal majesty, yet exerting no influence over the minds of the people," etc., (page 238.)

living in Israel after Samuel and before Jeremiah. We must find him elsewhere.

The conditions under consideration here are fully met in Moses. After forty years of education, training, culture in the court of Pharaoh, we have his next forty years in this very land of Arabia. We know that a mind of such powers and of such culture *will think*. Among the renowned sages of Edom and of the great east country, there were some other minds of thought and culture, contact with whom would beget acquaintance; mutual sympathy and a common interest would develop discussion. It need not surprise us that such minds should be keenly alive to the great problems of God's providence and moral government over men. It is by no means incredible that the human mind began to grapple with those problems at a very early age of the world. Occasions adapted to excite inquiry were sure to arise.—If our chronological data approximate the truth, Job may have been still living when Moses was passing his forty years of shepherd life in that land. At least he could not have been long deceased, and his history must have been still fresh in tradition, if not even in the memory of surviving friends. Whether Moses found any thing in writing, and if any thing, how much;—whether in substance only or in full form as it now appears, can never be known with absolute certainty. It is safe enough to say that Moses *might have been the author*. All the qualities of authorship apparent in the book are in fullest accord with the known talents and training of Moses, and with the five books which certainly came from his hand.—Moreover, not only such qualities of authorship as lie in the line of mental gifts and culture, imagination and poetic power, but also the *knowledge*—the points of truth pertaining to this subject which appear in his book, become important testimony on the question whether he can have been the author.—Under this head, let me call special attention to two points:—

(a) Knowledge of a promised Messiah:

(b) Conceptions respecting the work and manner of the world's creation.

(a) We shall see that a fair construction of Job's words (19: 25-27) involves some knowledge of the early promise of a Redeemer to come upon the earth. Did Moses know any thing of this promised Redeemer *before he went* into the land of Midian? The writer to the Hebrews answers this question for us, showing that Moses not only knew of that

promise but had felt its power upon his heart and life; for under that power he “chose suffering affliction with the people of God before the momentary pleasures of sin, esteeming reproach for Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.” (Heb. 11: 24-27). Now we can not know definitely how far the thoughts and the words ascribed to Job may have had their birth in the mind of the author; but we know that Moses had experienced the sublime moral power of that primal promise of a Messiah, and was competent, therefore, to put this element of conquering faith into the experience of the great sufferer.

(b) Conceptions in regard to the work and the manner of the creation appear especially in the address of the Lord (38:). This passage gives prominence to the gathering of the earth's waters; enwrapping them in swathing bands of cloud and darkness; assigning to them their bounds that they come not up upon the dry land any more; causing the rain-fall, etc., etc.

The careful reader of this chapter will be struck with the close resemblance of these conceptions with those which he finds in Gen. 1 and 2. If these conceptions (Job 38:) and the words that clothe them are due in any measure to the author of the book, we readily think of Moses as the author also of Genesis, and shall not wonder that the same conceptions of creation and the same phraseology should obtain here in Job and there in Genesis. If it be said that with great probability, Moses in making up the first chapters of Genesis, compiled from very ancient written documents, I reply:—Nothing forbids that those documents may have been among the chosen people in Egypt and brought to his eye while yet under a pious mother's religious training there.

5. A fifth point of some importance for its bearing upon the author and age of this book lies in its time-relations to other books of the Hebrew Scriptures as indicated by its reference to them or their reference to it.—We find in Job no allusion to any part of the Hebrew Scriptures as then in existence. Its author knew the great facts of the creation and of the flood; but whether from the written records as they come to us in Genesis, or from tradition, can never be determined. We find nothing to indicate that he had read any other portion of the Old Testament. The three friends could not have read the story of Joseph—a good man, yet suffering sorely despite of his innocence—and indeed *because of it*, yet rising through his very sufferings to the noblest

dignity of character and the highest rank in social life and political power. As already noted, neither the author nor his disputants seem to know any thing of the deliverance of the chosen people from Egyptian bondage, nor of their triumph at the Red Sea, or their life in the wilderness; nothing of Sinai, or of the laws civil and religious given through Moses, nor of the entrance into Canaan. It would seem to be a legitimate inference from these facts that the Book of Job must have been written before the Book of Exodus and even before its great events occurred.

On the other hand, some later Hebrew books refer to the Book of Job in a way to attest its prior existence. The allusion to Job in Ezekiel (14: 14-20) shows that it was extant then. Jeremiah cursing the day of his birth (20: 14-18) may be assumed to be in imitation of Job 3. Strong resemblances to passages in Job occur in later books, but no great reliance can be placed in any argument built on mere resemblance.

6. There is yet another source of argument bearing upon the question of authorship which should receive attention and have weight, viz.: Its admission into the canon of Hebrew Scriptures. Long as there has been any Hebrew canon, this Book of Job has been one of the number. All the authorities which define that canon certify that Job belongs in it. —*How came it there?*

All those books were written by men accredited among the Hebrew people as "prophets". None other was ever admitted into their canon. Whatever notions as to inspiration may have prevailed among other people in any age of the world, *they* believed in genuine inspiration. They knew that they had among themselves from time to time men who were taught of God. The teachings of these heaven-taught men were entirely decisive and severely stringent *against* accepting any other writings as sacred and of divine authority except those of known prophets. The Jewish nation in all ages (Josephus being witness) held this doctrine tenaciously, ready to seal it with their blood, that holy men of God had given them certain writings, and that not a written word might be admitted into the sacred collection except those which came certainly and undeniably from the pen and the tongues of these prophets of God. This is his language: "From the death of Moses to that of Artaxerxes, *the prophets* who have followed Moses have described the things which were done during the age of each one re-

spectively, in thirteen books". "From the time of Artaxerxes until our present period (after the Christian era) all occurrences have been written down, but they are not regarded as entitled to the like credit with those which precede, *because there was no certain succession of prophets*".—"In all Jews it is implanted even from their birth to regard our sacred books as being the instructions of God, and to abide steadfastly by them, and if it be necessary, to die gladly for them".

It is therefore settled that the author of Job must have been a known, accredited prophet of God. Hence in point of birth, nationality and religion, he was not an Arabian nor an Egyptian. This book never came into Palestine, commending itself for reception among the accredited oracles of God on the ground that it represented the poetry, the learning, the theology or the wisdom of either Arabia or Egypt. There was no point in the Hebrew history, say between Samuel and the exile, when the relations of Israel to either Arabia or Egypt were such that Israel and her prophets and priests could have looked to either Arabia or Egypt for a book inspired of God, or could have received one so written. The supposition is simply incredible.

Yet as we have seen, the internal evidence of the book shows that it was *not written by a resident of Canaan*, but must have been written by a man perfectly familiar with Arabia—familiar with it moreover from personal observation; familiar also with Egypt.

From these facts, my conclusion is that one man known to history, *meets all these conditions*, and *only one*, viz.: *Moses*. He was pre-eminently a *prophet of God*. His name and prestige as the author of Job were amply sufficient to secure for it the readiest possible reception into the Hebrew canon.* He had lived in Arabia forty years, yet was not of Arabia; had lived in Egypt also forty years; yet was never by birth, nationality or religion, an Egyptian.

A word is due here as to the sense in which I speak of Moses as the author of Job. I leave undecided the ques-

* Froude overcomes the acknowledged difficulty of getting such a book into the Hebrew canon by assuming its admission *very early*:—"How it found its way into the canon, smiting as it does through and through the most deeply seated Jewish prejudices, is the chief difficulty about it now—to be explained only by a traditional acceptance among the sacred books, dating back from the old times of the national greatness", etc. (p. 231.)

tion whether he learned the facts of its history from oral tradition, personal contact with the original actors, or from written documents. Nor is it important here to decide how much the points of argument or the phraseology of the reported discussions may owe to his shaping hand. But, on the positive side, in naming Moses as the author of this book, I make him responsible at least for editing, perhaps for writing, and certainly for bringing the book to the people of Israel and placing it in their sacred canon. Its inspiration rests on his known character as a prophet of God.

7. Still another consideration sustaining the very early writing of this book rests upon its relation to *progress of doctrine* on the points discussed. This "progress" will demand our attention in the sequel. At this point the result may be so far anticipated as to say that the doctrines held by the three friends were probably the earliest human opinions on the great problem of suffering, and therefore indicate the very early age of the book.

V. We pass to a kindred topic—*the work done by the author*.—Here I do not inquire *who* put into written form these discussions—the parts assigned respectively to Eliphaz and his associates; to Job; to Elihu; and to the Lord; but I raise the question whether he reported their speeches *verbatim*, or only for *substance of thought*, giving those thoughts their poetic form and dress with his own hand, allowing free scope to his own literary taste and skill in setting forth their views. This question has only a secondary importance; hence a very brief notice of it must suffice.—The earlier critics who wrote on this book held mostly the former view; all the more modern hold the latter, induced thereto by these considerations, mainly—(a) That the tone of high and well sustained literary culture and finish, coupled with poetic genius, forbids the supposition of an *ex tempore* discussion, reported *verbatim*. It is not in human nature for men to speak offhand in such style as appears throughout these discussions.—(b) The literary style is *one* and not many—indicating the work of one mind, and not of several. If each one of the six speakers had been precisely reported, it is simply impossible that there should not have been more diversity in literary merit and finish than is apparent here.

VI. The moral design and purpose of the book is a point of supreme importance. It is vital to the value of the book

to us that we apprehend this point definitely, clearly, and justly.—The book omits to state explicitly its own moral design, but leaves us to infer it from its contents. We must reach it mainly by inquiries in this line :—What were *in fact* the vital points raised in this discussion and how were they ultimately decided?

It is almost too obvious to need remark (yet it has been often overlooked) that the very highest importance must attach to the *final decision given by the Lord himself*. Surely if the Almighty came down to speak as the umpire in this discussion, his speech will give us the really great and vital issues. The supreme moral purpose, high above all subordinate purposes, will come to view in his decision.

It will be useful to make and to carry out a distinction between the main and the subordinate purposes embraced in the design of the book. The main purpose will appear *in the final decision by the Almighty taken in connection with the historic facts which gave occasion to the discussion*. The subordinate purposes are evolved from the body of the discussion between the several parties.

The great theme of debate is—the *design of God in sending (or permitting) suffering upon men* (especially good men) *in this world*.—This general theme involves subordinate questions :—*Why* does He permit? Is it for punishment, real retribution; or for discipline and correction in his goodness and wisdom? Is it administered always *with justice*—to each according to his deserts relatively to the deserts of other men,—or (a different supposition) relatively to the demands of the law which sin breaks? These subordinate questions were the staple points discussed between Job and his three friends, including also Elihu.

The *main design* of the book as evolved in the speech of Jehovah, was twofold :

1. To justify the assumption that the ultimate reasons why suffering befalls good men in this world *may lie beyond the pale of human knowledge* as in this case of Job, the ultimate reason for whose suffering was a test-issue between God and Satan.

2. To show that consequently submission to God's providence, and confidence in his wisdom and love, are man's true wisdom and supreme duty.—These were the points made and enforced in the final decision by the Almighty.

There may be reasons for his permission of suffering, that lie away in the secret counsels of the Most High, originating

perhaps in his relations to Satan or to the angels of light or of darkness, which we can not know, but which He knows, and estimates at their full value. Therefore we ought to confide the government of the world to his wisdom and submissively trust him to manage it well.

Certain subordinate designs contemplated in the discussions recorded here we may put thus :—(1) To show that the doctrine held by Job's three friends was fundamentally *false* and essentially of pernicious tendency—this doctrine being that all suffering in this life is *retributive*—sent as punishment for sin—and is therefore not only the *proof* but the *measure* of the sufferer's guilt.—(2) To show how very good men may wrestle with this great problem of suffering, and be bitterly perplexed and agonized by it, especially when false views of it—such as those held by Job's friends—are thrust upon them and they are reproached and condemned as hypocrites and as the greatest of sinners because they are extreme sufferers :—(3) To disclose the darkness that prevailed on these points in the early ages of our world ; shown perhaps that we may the better appreciate the increase of light from that time onward through the Old Testament age to the yet more full revelations made by the glorious Sun of righteousness at his rising.

Let it now be suggested *negatively* : (1) That the main question of the book is not the point raised in the opening historic chapters as at issue between God and Satan, viz., Whether there is any really *unselfish piety* ; whether Job's piety was or was not a refined selfishness—a serving of God for the present reward which God was giving and was expected to give.

This issue sufficed to explain the extraordinary inflictions which fell upon Job. It also gave occasion to the long discussions in this book. This is one part of the service which the issue made between God and Satan performed. But the question whether Job's piety would or would not bear this terrible strain without the least moral failure seems not to have been among the things to be settled by this book. In the final issue, no notice is taken of the point raised by Satan. It had manifestly served its purpose when it had accounted for the fearful and otherwise unaccountable severity of Job's afflictions.

Yet God's ways and purposes are *manifested*, compassing in every movement more results than our wisdom is wont to think of and indeed more than our finite intelligence can

even comprehend when the facts are mainly before us. It is therefore quite supposable that among his subordinate purposes in this trial of Job, God may have embraced this one, viz.: to show how the human nature of his own dear children—not yet perfectly sanctified—bears itself under terrific temptation; how it struggles, wrestles, and sometimes reels under the shock and the strain that are too stern and stubborn for merely human strength; and then how God comes to the rescue, and grace saves the tempted one from utter fall.—This mapping out of Job's experiences, regarded in this point of light, has useful lessons for us—not least among which is the suggestion it makes that if Job had only been able to read from our New Testament how the Lord "makes all things work together for good to them that love God" and how he chastens whom he loves, he might have breasted the surging waves of this troubled sea with calmer trust and steadier nerve. Ah, indeed; and if he could have read the whole story of this book that bears his name, or if some angel from among those "sons of God" had come down to whisper in his ear what Satan had been impudent enough to say in the very face of God, and how the Lord proposed to him to test the question of Job's unselfishness if he pleased, then would not the patriarch have stood up to the rack and the torture, with a sense of an object grand enough to justify the utmost suffering that human nerves can bear? Yet the grandeur of this moral conflict is due in large measure to the awful darkness of the night and to the terrible uncertainties of the storm through which the great sufferer was destined to pass. With God's help Job did weather the gale and enter the harbor at last—a nobly saved man in the end—one more moral lesson from this wonderful book.

(2) The great question of the book is not this (as some have held)—Whether Job believed in a future retribution; or whether the doctrine of a future life is vital to the true solution of the great problem of suffering as it stands forth to human view here.—(3) Nor is it the purpose of this book to discuss abstractly the *uses of suffering* in the great system of agencies for perfecting human character. True, something may be learned incidentally from the book, bearing on that question; but to suppose that this was the main question of the book is to ignore things most patent, and give chief prominence to what is very incidental.—(4) Nor, finally, is it the purpose of the book to disclose the

subtle power of self-righteousness over human souls or the mischiefs of an undue regard for reputation as exemplified in the case of Job. This notion comes of overlooking the main things of the book and magnifying points which in their relative worth are almost insignificant.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

CHAPTER I.

1. There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name *was* Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

Of "the land of Uz", see Introduction, page 5.

A man of unblemished integrity. This phrase correctly measures the significance of the original words for "perfect and upright".—"Eschewed", in the sense of the more modern words, shun, avoid. The old word "eschew" has affinities with the English word, to shy, in the sense to keep clear of, to turn sharply away from.

2. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

3. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

4. And his sons went and feasted *in their* houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

In nomadic life throughout the great deserts of Arabia, property in land was only general—a right to go and to occupy temporarily where they would, provided they did not come into collision with others. In the close, strict sense, all property was in *cattle*. Hence Job's "substance" his real property, was estimated by the count of his varieties of cattle.—Camels were used for travel and for burdens; are sometimes described as "the *ship* of the desert".—She-asses were valued for their labor and for their milk.—"Household" is the collective term for servants.—"Greatest" refers especially to his wealth.—His sons held festivals successively each in his own house on his own birthday.

5. And it was so, when the days of *their* feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings *according* to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

When the annual circuit had been made, one festival in each son's house, Job sent and purified them by the offering of special sacrifices, one for each of his sons, for he feared that under the temptations incident to festivities, they might have sinned. Good man that he was—a careful and conscientious father, watchful evermore over the spiritual life of his children—why should he not guard them against probable dangers on these occasions?

On the sense of the word “cursed” (both here and in v. 11 and 2: 5, 9) there has been much discussion and diversity of views. The original is the common, well-known Hebrew word for *bless**—so that the great problem has been, How can the same word mean both bless and curse?—The only satisfactory analysis of the significations of this word is this—that it became the current term for the social farewell at the parting of friends, equivalent to adieu; God be with you; and hence, secondly, became associated with the sense of *leaving*, parting from. This secondary sense is supposed therefore to be the one which obtains here. Job feared that his sons had abandoned God in their hearts—had lost the sense of his presence, and allowed their souls to become divorced from the fear and love of God. He feared they had *bid farewell* to God in the sense of dropping him out of their thoughts, concern and affection.† We can readily excuse the anxious father for this fear. There was danger in this direction. This sense of the word therefore befits the circumstances, as well as comes naturally from the current usage of this farewell term.

6. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

7. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

8. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a

*כָּרַךְ

† A similar usage appears in both ancient and modern classics. Horace says, “Valeat res ludicra”; farewell to the stage. Shakespeare: “But farewell, compliment”.

“Farewell, faint-hearted and degenerate king,
In whose cold blood, no spark of honor bides”.

perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

9. Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

10. Hast not thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

11. But put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

12. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thy hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

Upon what is said here of Satan see Introduction, pages 4, 5.—The question, Who are these “sons of God”? is probably best answered by referring to Job 38: 7: holy beings; angels unfallen. That Satan should come into their assembly, reporting himself as just in from ranging up and down over this fallen world, has its fact supported by the words of Peter—“Going about, seeking whom he may devour”;—and its analogy in the scenes described in 1 Kings 22: 19. It is easy for us to raise more questions on this subject than the wisest of men can answer; *e. g.*, Where was this meeting held; and when? Are such meetings held steadily or only occasionally? Is this mere costume—a way of giving point and distinctness to the fact that Satan is working a scheme of opposition against God and all righteousness, always traducing righteous men and in every possible way fostering the interests of a great rebellion against Jehovah; or, are we to accept this statement as in form a fact of the spiritual world?—Leaving undetermined all questions upon which revelation has shed no light, it is important for us to admit, what every-where revelation has taught us—that Satan *is* a real person; *is* the enemy of all righteousness; *is* “going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”; *is* evermore “an accuser of the brethren” (Rev. 12: 10). There were doubtless good reasons why the revealing spirit should give us so much light as appears in these two chapters of Job respecting his agencies in our world. Indeed, it may be supposed that Satan is brought to view here, not merely to indicate to us his work among men and his moral attitude toward God and all the good, but also to suggest one reason why God should permit these extreme afflictions to befall one of the best of men. This terrible scene of suffering might otherwise seem unaccountable even to the angels nearest the throne above. Moreover, God might deem it wise to permit a test case to show the devil and all his party how God can save his children; bring good out of Satan’s intended evil; and frustrate his schemes, to his own everlasting chagrin and confusion.

“Hast thou considered my servant Job?”—set thy thought

upon him as one worthy of thy special notice—a very pertinent question to be asked of Satan who has no love for such exemplary men and is little apt to notice them save to traduce and blacken—if he can.—Satan's reply is thoroughly characteristic:—Job's piety is sheer selfishness; he serves God only for pay. There is no unselfish piety. Thou hast hedged him about with thy protection, hast carefully preserved for him all his great possessions, so that he finds it profitable to serve thee as much as he does. But now, turn thy hand and instead of protecting, destroy his great possessions, and he will abandon thee—will bid thee farewell, even to thy face, and thou wilt see the end of all his piety, service and homage.—Note that while Satan proposed that the Lord should do this, the Lord gave Satan permission to do it himself. So, the result would be more convincing, and the agency itself would be specially gratifying to one who is so much of a devil.—The permission this time reached only Job's possessions; not his person.—It is well for our race that Satan's power in this world is limited by the divine permission. God always knows its permitted amount, and how to provide for his trusting people a way of escape, and help in their need so that they may be able to bear it. See Paul's allusion to this (1 Cor. 10: 13 and Eph. 6: 10–16).

13. And there was a day when his sons and his daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

14. And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:

15. And the Sabeans fell *upon them*, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

These Sabeans are supposed to have descended from Sheba, the fifth in line of descent from Shem (Gen. 10: 21–28). Their home was in that great "eastern" land of the remote Arabian desert (v. 30).—Savage incursions for plunder were then, as in all later ages, the law of life for those nomadic tribes of the desert. In this case we must suppose they were both instigated and guided to their point of attack, by Satan.—The oxen and the asses together with the servants who had them in charge and were laboring with them in the field, were all swept away—the cattle driven off and the servants slain—all but the one who escaped to tell the sad story.

16. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

The next stroke fell from heaven—"the fire of God" which in Hebrew usage is commonly lightning. (See 1 Kings 18: 38 and

2 Kings 1: 12 and Lev. 9: 24; 1 Chron. 21: 26 and 2 Chron. 7: 1). We are to find here another case of Satanic agency, yet wrought strictly under divine permission. It would bear the more severely upon the heart of Job for its seeming to come from the very hand of God himself.—Note that this infliction swept from Job all his flocks of lesser cattle; and also the servants in charge, with the exception of one man to bear to him the tidings.

17. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Interspersing inflictions from the hand of man with those which came more apparently from the hand of God, we have next a second predatory troop, viz., of Chaldeans—in that early age, a wild savage race, holding the mountain regions of Armenia. Later they came down upon the plains of Mesopotamia and founded the great Chaldean empire. Their history may be traced further by means of various allusions to them in the Scriptures, *e. g.*, Isa. 23: 13 and 13: 19 and 43: 12, and 2 Kings 24: 2, etc.

In this assault they formed three bands, to surround their prey and make escape more difficult. The camels they drove off; the servants in charge they slew, one messenger only escaping.

18. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

19. And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

The first three inflictions have swept away Job's property entire, leaving him nothing: this takes his children. While they were feasting in their eldest brother's house, a tornado from the wilderness struck the house and laid it in ruins; the young men, his sons, were buried beneath! This must have seemed to Job to come directly from the hand of the Almighty.

20. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshiped,

21. And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

22. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Here are the customary tokens of intense grief, yet blended with the strongest expressions of resignation to the divine will—a resignation not coldly philosophical but deeply sincere, grateful

and adoring. Thus far Satan has won no laurels in this fight. Job's piety is the brighter for the fire it has passed through. Is it not more than beautiful, yea morally sublime, to say from the heart under such absolute bereavement:—"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord!"

As to these tokens of grief, they are of course oriental—those of the country and age where Job lived. To rend the garments, to shave the head, to fall, prostrate upon the earth, to offer worship by these profound prostrations attended with the appropriate utterances of grief—all these were in their view the natural language of great sorrow.

"Return thither," *i. e.*, to the dust, to the bosom of earth, my second mother. Job's thought is obviously upon the original sentence—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Born naked, bringing nothing into the world, I am in a sense ready now to die naked,—shorn of all that men hold dear in the line of earthly possessions. Of all my herds and flocks not a hoof remains to me; not a servant of my great household; not a child to my name! How naked and how desolate! Yet all those treasures the Lord gave; why should I murmur that he takes them all away? Rather let me bless his glorious name!



CHAPTER II.

1. Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.

2. And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

3. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

Despite of his utter failure thus far, Satan is still ready and even eager for one more onset; and the Lord seems not averse to a more extreme trial of his servant Job. A second meeting is therefore held of the sons of God, Satan coming again among them—the account of this meeting being in substantially the same words as of the former. Triumphantly the Lord refers Satan to the case of Job, still holding fast his integrity although

Satan had been moving the Lord to swallow him up (Heb.) without good cause in Job himself for any such infliction. A less frequent sense of the Heb. word for "*without cause*" is *in vain*, without securing the result sought. Either sense might be admissible here. The former is the more usual, and, so far, has the preference.

4. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

5. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

6. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

"Skin for skin" is manifestly a proverb, coming from the world of trade, and signifying—any thing for its equivalent. In barter, skin went for skin, one an offset for the other. In this sense Satan applies his own words; all a man hath—all his goods—he gives cheerfully as an equivalent for his life. In the application he meant to insinuate that these inflictions upon Job were still very trivial and of small account—had not half stripped him, for his sound body, still left to him, was more than an equivalent for all the Lord had taken away. Make this trial (he would say) more thorough; put forth thy hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will bid thee farewell before thy very face and quit thy service.

The Lord replied: He is in your hand for the further trial you demand, only spare his life. Give him pain to your heart's content.

7. So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

8. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

"Sore boils"—an oriental disease and not the modern one known under this English name. The best critics suppose that this disease of Job was the black leprosy, called "elephantiasis" from the resemblance of its blotched, rough skin and swollen limbs, to the skin and limbs of that animal. It was one of the ten plagues upon Egypt (Ex. 9: 9-11): is threatened (Deut. 28: 27, 35); and is described somewhat definitely by its symptoms in Lev. 13.

Conant gives this description:

"In this disease small spots first appear on the skin, then tumors, of the size of a pea at first, increasing to that of a walnut or a hen's egg, with deep furrows between, covering the whole body. Finally, many of these suppurate and form ulcers, with a bloody and very offensive discharge which dries and hardens to dark colored scales. The face becomes bloated and glistening, the eyes feeble

and watery, the breath offensive, the voice weak and hoarse or entirely lost. The sufferer is subject to extreme dejection; his nights are sleepless, or harassed with frightful dreams. In the last stage of this disease, the extremities perish and fall off, the bones and ligaments being destroyed by the ulceration. No cure has been found for this terrible malady though the patient may survive many years."

To sit down upon the ground, and still more to sit in ashes, betokened the extremity of grief.—A potsherd—piece of broken pottery, such as he would readily find among the ashes, he took to scrape himself to relieve the intolerable itching and burning—a relief at best but momentary, and followed by severer pains.

That Satan, with permission from God, can inflict disease upon men, is fully implied in the demoniacal possessions and in their forms of disease which appear often in the gospel history (*e. g.*, Matt. 9: 32-34 and Mark 3: 23, 24 and Luke 13: 16, etc.)

9. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God and die.

10. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Job's afflictions were terribly heightened in severity by these instigations from his wife. When he so greatly needed not only sympathy but moral support to his tried spirit, it was dreadful to meet only this cold, heartless reproach which seemed to imply that his trouble came of still maintaining his moral integrity toward God! Oh, how could she throw her entire influence to help Satan and to make her husband's trial insupportable!—"Curse God and die" (as above explained) means—Renounce God; bid farewell forever to God and to your pious regard for God; and then let death come if it will! What's the use of such a suffering life?—Some critics upon this passage have given this Heb. word for *bless* its usual sense, but in irony, thus:—Bless God if so you will; this is all you get for it—to die! The sense first above given, has the support of its usage in this history (1: 11 and 2: 5) and must be preferred.

Job's reply charges her with *folly*—that extreme of folly which is the essence of such impiety toward God.—"Shall we receive good?" etc. Some critics read the first clause affirmatively and only the second interrogatively: We receive good at God's hand constantly, richly, far beyond our desert; shall we not therefore accept the evil which his hand in loving wisdom may send? But the original gives as much authority for making the first clause a question as the second, and the sentence is thus made more spirited and forcible; Shall we continually receive good from the Lord's hand—enough assuredly to prove his love to us—and then

not be willing to bear submissively and trustfully the small evils which the same good Being may see fit to send?

Again it is testified that thus far Job "did not sin with his lips."

11. Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite; for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him, and to comfort him.

12. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

13. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that *his* grief was very great.

See allusions to these three friends in the Introduction, page 6. They seem to have come from somewhat remote parts—men prominent in their respective homes, representative men, as Job also was in his home sphere.

The scene, as sketched here, is inimitably touching. They saw him from afar, but so changed they could not recognize him! Is it strange that they should lift up their voices in loud wails of grief—should rend their mantles and sprinkle dust on their heads? *Think* of seven days' silence, sitting there by their old friend, now so desolate, so terribly smitten of God!—We must suppose these were hours of distressing perplexity as well as of sympathetic grief. With their theory of the relation of suffering to sin, they stood amazed at this supposed evidence of his awful hypocrisy, and were weighing the question as to the duty of rebuke and its hopeful methods. But thus far Job too was silent, and they could not know how his heart was bearing this stern and fearful trial.



CHAPTER III.

1. After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.

Two chapters of historic introduction in prose having fully brought the case before us, the poem proper commences here.—It may be a question whether the phrase—"opened his mouth"—is purposely emphatic, indicating that his pent-up, long suppressed emotions, refused to be restrained longer, and now his mouth (so to speak) bursts open and this torrent of imprecations upon his day pours itself forth. If the phrase were not a

common orientalism, there would be great plausibility in this view of its significance. Manifestly he speaks as one whose griefs are too urgent, too tumultuous to be longer suppressed in silence. Was it aggravated rather than relieved by the presence of these three friends—sitting seven days in unexplained silence? Did he begin to forecast their state of feeling as of men ready to arraign and rebuke him for supposed hypocrisy, rather than to give him their sympathy, their consolations and their prayers? Be the cause what it may, we miss in this chapter the sweet resignation and the calm good sense and piety which shine out in the passages chap. 1: 21 and 2: 10.—“Cursed his day”—his birthday as appears from the following context and also from the usage of the word in chap. 1: 4.—This Hebrew word for curse* is not the common word for “bless” which we find translated “curse” in chap. 1: 5, 11 and in 2: 5, 9.

2. And Job spake, and said,

3. Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man-child conceived.

4. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.

5. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

“Job spake”—in the original, answered, but in the sense, common in the Scriptures, of speaking to the circumstances of the case, yet not in reply to words really spoken before. Job gave utterance to long pent emotions.—“Let the day perish”—not so much cease to be as to *have been*. Let the day and all it brought with it—especially my own birth into being—go into nonentity, bearing with it my own existence. It avails nothing to reason against such a prayer that the thing asked is an utter impossibility. In his calm moments Job would have seen this. But these are expressions of uncontrolled emotion, taking on the strong forms of oriental speech. It is equivalent to a prayer that he had never been born, or if born, yet only to die in birth.—Perish also the night which said (so the Hebrew makes the night speak) “a man-child is delivered.” Let that day be darkness, no sun arising upon it; let not God from above look after it to bring it under his usual regard and count it among the days of time. Let darkness and death-shade—not *stain*—but *reclaim* it as their own and take it into their own domain.—Not so well—“the blackness of the day;” but rather—Let the *obscurations* of the day terrify it—said with reference to eclipses which throw their dark shadows upon the day. The word “terrify” looks toward the superstitions of ancient times which regarded an eclipse as a fearful omen of great calamities impending. Let dark eclipses bring down all their terrors upon it.

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6. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months.

7. Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein.

8. Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.

9. Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but *have* none; neither let it see the dawning of the day:

10. Because it shut not up the doors of my *mother's* womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.

It is only by a poetic variation that Job passes from imprecations upon the day to like imprecations upon the *night* of his birth.—As for that night, let utter darkness seize upon and hold it; let it not *rejoice* (better than “be joined”) among the days of the year. (This improvement in the sense comes from deriving the verb from another root).—“Let that night be solitary,” *i. e.*, barren, no living births occurring in it: let no joyful shouts be heard therein, over a man-child born.—V. 8 alludes to persons supposed to have power to curse any particular day so that every thing attempted on that day shall fail and the day be sacred to ill-fortune and calamity.—Its last clause means—Who are ready or skilled to arouse to frenzy the crooked serpent, the “leviathan” (Heb.). This also belongs to the domain of oriental superstitions, according to which certain people professed the skill of exciting serpents to frenzy, and charming them down to quietude. To such men Job would consecrate his birth-night and let them have it, all their own to curse at their will.—Let the very stars of that night be dark. The last clause of v. 9 gives this beautiful image:—Let not that night look forth through the eyelids of the dawn—to behold the sweet rays of morning.—All these imprecations Job poured upon that ill-starred night because it did not forestall his birth into a suffering existence and thus hide all sorrow from his eyes.

11. Why died I not from the womb? *why* did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?

12. Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?

Thus deep emotion is wont to repeat its utterances of grief with only the slightest variations. How ardently this sufferer would pray (if he might) that he had never been born alive! Why did my Maker provide beforehand a mother's lap (“knees”) to receive me, and a mother's breast with nutriment for my subsistence?—The English word “prevent”, the reader should notice, has not the modern sense, *shut off, forestall*; but the

ancient sense—*provide beforehand*—be in advance of my need, in readiness to meet it.

13. For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,

14. With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves;

15. Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver:

16. Or as a hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants *which* never saw light.

Oh, how quiet (as he thinks of them) are the dead, especially those who have had no earthly life! He thinks also of their company in the under-world—the great men of earth, all are there.—“Who built ruins for themselves”—suggests the vanity of the proudest human labors; for princes with immense wealth and infinite toil have built for themselves splendid mansions only to have them become vast ruins.

17. There the wicked cease *from* troubling; and there the weary be at rest.

18. *There* the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.¹

19. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

So Job enlarges upon the supposed state of the dead in the under-world, the leading thought being, exemption from the sorest afflictions of the present earthly life; quiet after turmoil; rest after exhausting labor. In verse 18 the bond-men, restrained of their freedom, may well include the slave, for he hears no more the voice of the task-master—the slave-driver.—“Small and great” both are there, and there they are all equally great—those once in power are in power no longer. The oppressor’s rod is broken forever.

20. Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter *in* soul;

21. Which long for death, but it *cometh* not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;

22. Which rejoice exceedingly, *and* are glad when they can find the grave?

23. *Why is light given* to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?

In the first clause of v. 20, Job uses not the passive voice—(is given) but the active, saying—Why does one—some one, give? etc., yet with manifest reference to God, though he forbears to speak his name. Why does God give light to the wretched man

—to those who so long to die? etc. So in v. 23, the same construction is continued from v. 20: Why does God give the light of life to the man whose whole earthly existence is darkened with overshadowing calamity? etc. Here the name of God is at last spoken, but has been virtually assumed throughout this passage.

24. For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured forth like the waters.

25. For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

26. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

All this applies in full force (Job would say) to myself—"for" my sighs come before my bread. While men in comfort and prosperity sit at their joyful board, I have only sighs and moans, anticipating—coming in before—these usually bright moments of human life. All the worst evils I have ever feared have come down in one overwhelming avalanche upon me. I could not really rest because of these foreboding apprehensions—and now the dire realities come rushing over me!

The Christian reader will ask—What must be thought of these impassioned utterances?—While it is but fair to make some abatement from our estimate of his real meaning on the score of oriental hyperbole—the habit of intense emotion and of very strong expressions thereof, and while it should also be considered that his disease was of the sort that fearfully rasp human nerves, rob the sufferer of restoring sleep, and beget an almost resistless depression of spirits, yet still we must say—This is not the language of submission to God's overruling providence. We miss in it the tone of resignation which we delightfully recognize in the two previous chapters. We must set it to the account of human infirmity. When in the end Job came to apprehend God, not as by the hearing of the ear but as by the more perfect eye—when he could say—"but now mine eye seeth Thee", he ceased to give utterance to such emotions.



CHAPTER IV.

First Speech of Eliphaz.

1. Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

2. *If* we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?

Eliphaz here opens the reply—the recognized *foreman* of this group of friends—probably the eldest; manifestly the ablest.—His

first words are modest and cautious, as of one well aware of the delicacy of administering such reproof as in his view the case demanded. Should one venture a word with thee, wilt thou be offended? But who can forbear to speak? Literally, "withhold words, who can?"

3. Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

4. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.

5. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

The sense of these words is clear and well put in our English version, saving that the last word "troubled" (v. 5) is somewhat stronger in the original, viz., confounded, nonplussed, as one who has lost his self-possession and his spirit of manly resolution.—This opening of the debate on the side of Job's friends is severe, more adapted to wound than to soothe or conciliate. Underneath lies the insinuation that Job's words have been better than his heart; that he had known better than he had lived; that though able to counsel others well and minister to their succor and consolation, he was now proving himself even more weak than other men—almost a pitiable case of pusillanimity.

6. *Is not this* thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?

This English fails to suggest readily the true and full sense—which is this: Has not thy piety been thy confidence; and thy hope—has it not been in the integrity of thy ways?—Thy assumed piety has been the ground of all thy confidence—by which Eliphaz suggests that the root of Job's difficulty is that this assumed piety is only assumed, and hence, under such stern trial, his confidence has gone overboard—utterly sunk with the disappearance of his piety.—The word "fear" is the current Old Testament term for piety.

7. Remember, I pray thee, who *ever* perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?

8. Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

9. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.

Recall now:—Who is he that, being innocent, has perished? Eliphaz holds this to be a universal proposition: the guiltless never perish; the righteous are never cut off. Calamities from God's hand fall only upon the guilty.—The figures from husbandry—plowing, sowing and reaping—are plain, conveying the sentiment that God's providential retributions are uniform and ceaseless.

No human power can withstand—no human skill evade—this law of retribution upon the guilty.

10. The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken.

11. The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.

These allusions to the lion can have no other application here save this—that no lion-like power or cunning can withstand the march and the sweep of God's agencies in providence for retribution upon guilty men.

12. Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.

13. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men,

14. Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.

Here Eliphaz relates the revelations which God had given to him in a vision.—“Now a thing” (better a *word*) came stealthily, or more literally—stole silently upon me, and mine ear caught the whisper thereof.—In those early ages, perhaps more frequently than in later times, God revealed himself to men in dreams. Sometimes these shaded off into what are distinctively called “visions” as having more or less of a prophetic character. Whatever may be the true view of the normal philosophy of dreams, there can be no doubt that God has power to interpose a special agency and does use them for purposes of moral instruction, and, more often still, of pure moral impression.

15. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:

16. It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image *was* before mine eyes, *there was* silence, and I heard a voice, *saying*,

17. Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker?

18. Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly:

19. How much less *in* them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation *is* in the dust, *which* are crushed before the moth?

One in sleep might have a sense that a spirit had come and was passing, but no mortal eye could discern the form thereof. Such were the impressions of Eliphaz. The voice heard, the words whispered so gently, were the externals of this revelation.—Shall man assume to be more just than God? is probably the sense, this being at once the more obvious and the more usual sense of the

Hebrew words, and also the very sin of which (in the view of Eliphaz) Job was guilty; for in tacitly impugning the justice of God in the afflictions sent upon himself, he assumed to be more just than his Maker—the providential Disposer of events and the Author of the inflictions upon Job.—Yet some critics prefer the sense—Shall mortal man be justified by God—be accounted just in the presence of God and in his perfect eye? But this sense seems less pertinent in the present case and comes less naturally from the original words.—The point is enforced by reference to the holy ones before his throne—his servants—*i. e.*, his angels—these words being equivalent names for the same class of beings. God does not confide in them as his counselors, but imputes to them folly in the sense of a wisdom all inferior to his own—so thrown into the shade by the surpassing glory of his wisdom that it seems as darkness itself. The course of thought here does not require or even justify giving the sense of sin to this word “folly.”—How much less will God trust, and how much more will he charge with folly those that dwell, not in immortal bodies, nor in ethereal forms, but in houses of clay, etc.—“Crushed before the moth”—has been interpreted variously:—crushed *by* the moth; or *as* the moth is crushed; or *as* the moth crushes—destroys the garments which it consumes. The latter can not be the sense of the Heb. words. Of the two former, the second is best—*as* the moth is crushed, so easily does human life go out; so weak and frail is mortal man.*

20. They are destroyed from morning to evening; they perish for ever without any regarding it.

21. Doth not their excellency *which is* in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.

This is in the same line of thought, continuing and closing the words brought to his ear by the revealing Spirit.—From a morning to an evening the whole work is done; within a single day, they are beaten in pieces; they perish forever, no one regarding—so suddenly men scarcely take note of it or get their mind upon it. Gone forever, they return to their earthly home no more.—The Heb. word for excellence† illustrates the uncertainties of criticism, some applying it to the tent-cord; others from this figure to the life-cord of man; and yet others giving it the sense—whatever is best, super-excellent. I prefer the latter here, and take the phrase to mean that the very best things of human life, its dignities, honors, acquirements—all pass suddenly away, going as when the nomadic troop strike their tents and are gone. This figure lies in the verb for going away.—So they die and not in wisdom. This greatest, best of all human ac-

*The original seems not very explicit, the literal rendering being this: Whom destroyers crush in the presence of, at the face of, the moth. But this phrase may have the sense—*after the manner of*—and this I accept as the sense here.

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quisitions, they miss, and die without it.—All these points of human frailty are grouped here to give force to the idea that *such* a man so frail, so short-lived, of life so uncertain, whose best qualities are held by a tenure so slender—should not presume to lift himself above his Maker, or match his sense of justice against God's!



CHAPTER V.

Conclusion of Eliphaz's first speech.

1. Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?

Summon your witnesses, (Eliphaz would say to Job); invoke the testimony and the aid for your cause of good beings—all whom you will or can. I have brought forward the testimony of the spirit whose whispers I caught with my ear in a night-vision. Any rebutting testimony you may have is now in order.

2. For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.

3. I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.

4. His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there *any* to deliver them.

5. Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance.

Testimony of the good against my positions you will scarcely find—"for" these facts of God's providence are patent and incontrovertible; viz.: that wrath killeth the foolish (wicked) man. His own wickedness will surely work his destruction. It always does. *I* have seen it. The speaker makes the word *I* emphatic, and appeals here to his own personal observation. I have seen the wicked taking root—starting well in life as if they would make a tall, strong and enduring growth—i. e., a prosperous life; but suddenly I cursed his dwelling-place—probably in the sense of declaring it to be accursed rather than of imprecating a curse upon it. I did so for I saw that God's wrath lay upon it.—"His children are oppressed in the gate"—the place of civil tribunals. Their harvest the hungry thief or robber devours, seizing upon it despite of the thorn hedge which the owner raised for its protection.—Not the "robber" but rather the *snare* is gaping for their wealth. So the accumulations of the wicked man are swept away.

6. Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground ;

7. Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

The relations of thought expressed in our English by "although" and "yet" are neither apposite to the course of argument here, nor are they in the original, where in both cases we have the common Heb. word "*For.*" * I would therefore paraphrase thus: Wicked men will certainly be stripped of their wealth—"For" (first word of v. 6) "evil, calamity, does not come up out of the ground," but from the hand of the Great Moral Ruler; "for" (v. 7) "man is born to trouble;" calamity is as common and as much a thing of natural course as sin, and for the same reason. Because this is a sinning world, it is also a suffering world, and under the rule of a righteous God, can not be otherwise.—To show yet more clearly that our English version misses the real argument, let it be considered that the proposition—affliction does not come up from the ground as trees do, must really intend its opposite, viz., it *does come* from God's hand. But to say that *although* affliction comes from God, yet man is born to trouble—is to talk without meaning. Really the only reason why man is born to trouble is that he is born into a sinning world, in which suffering and sin are in more senses than one correlated, partly as an antidote; partly as a just retribution, and perhaps yet more as a premonition of a coming retribution that is to be perfect. Hence man is born to trouble because as a race he is born to sin.—Sinful man drifts toward suffering, calamity, as sparks naturally rise upward—this result being *natural* to him in the sense of following a uniform law of God's providential administration.

8. I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause :

9. Which doeth great things and unsearchable ; marvelous things without number :

10. Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields :

11. To set up on high those that be low ; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.

I can readily tell you what *I* would do, were I in your case. (The speaker makes the word *I* emphatic). I would go at once to God and commit my cause to him. He has done so many good things—has so constantly opened his great hand to bless his creatures—it must be the best possible thing for one in such afflictions as yours to hasten at once to his blessed feet for help.—The reader will notice that Eliphaz finds his light of God in nature—not in a written revelation; in God's great works of goodness in the natural world, and not in any revealed promise.

In his view God shapes his providences toward men to exalt the lowly and the humble mourner.

12. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands can not perform *their* enterprise.

13. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.

14. They meet with darkness in the day-time, and grope in the noonday as in the night.

The same Providence blesses the virtuous and abases the vicious.—“Disappointeth,” would be better put *breaketh*.—The counsels of the cunning are made hasty, rash, so that they rush upon their own destruction. God sees further than they. Daylight is not light to them. They run foul of darkness despite of the sun, and grope after light at noon as if it were midnight—which puts forcibly God’s ways to baffle the wisest schemes of wickedly designing men. See the figure—groping at noon-day—more fully drawn out, Deut. 28: 29.

15. But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.

16. So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.

The Hebrew word translated, “from the sword,” admits of a better derivation which makes it a participle,* with the sense—one made desolate—the victim of oppression. The word “poor” belongs to the last clause. The poetic parallelism is thus made complete:—So he saves the victim (of wrong) from their mouth, and the poor from the hand of the strong.

17. Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:

18. For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

It is interesting to notice how near Eliphaz comes to the great doctrine of Prov. 3: 11, 12 and of the New Testament (Heb. 12: 5, 6)—viz., that God sends suffering for chastisement and correction—for the moral good of the sufferer, so that such inflictions should by no means be resented (“despised”)—should never be considered hard, severe, unreasonable. For, the wounds which God makes, he is always ready to heal speedily, if only the sufferer repents and accepts the chastisement submissively.—The hard point in the doctrine of Eliphaz was that these inflictions always presupposed specially great sins. This was his fundamental mistake.

19. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

20. In famine he shall redeem thee from death : and in war from the power of the sword.

21. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue : neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.

22. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh : neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.

23. For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field : and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.

Such prosperity God would surely give the penitent whom his afflictions had brought to a better mind. Therefore let Job be moved to repent of his great sins.—Naturally he specifies those dangers which were common in the life of the desert—such as wild beasts, and the sharp stones which subjected whoever walked with bare feet, to bad wounds. “In league with the stones of the field,” had therefore in their life a meaning not to be despised.

24. And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle *shall be* in peace ; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.

The word for “habitation” is not a tent for man but a fold for his flocks. He shall visit this to see that all are there, and shall *miss none*—the sense of the word translated—“shall not *sin*.” This well known Heb. word* which primarily means to *miss*, to miss the mark—comes by a secondary sense to mean that worst mistake of all which the sinner makes who always fails ultimately of the good he seeks in sin.

25. Thou shalt know also that thy seed *shall be* great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.

26. Thou shalt come to *thy* grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season.

27. Lo this, we have searched it, so it *is* ; hear it, and know thou *it* for thy good.

To crown all, the penitent sufferer, (*e. g.*, Job) would have the joy of a numerous and precious posterity (although just then made childless by terrible bereavement), and would himself come to his grave in a ripe old age as the heavy corn sheaf is gathered in its time.—All this Eliphaz declares to be the result of his personal observations, and is therefore more sure of it. So he begs Job to believe and accept it, for his own good.

Thus endeth the first lesson of these well meaning but not altogether well taught friends. Its tone is on the whole calm if we judge of it from the standpoint of his theory. The root of his error lay in his assumption that Job *must* be in heart a hypocrite—a very great sinner. Assuming that suffering sent from God must accurately measure the sin of the sufferer, how could he infer any thing less or else than this ?

CHAPTER VI.

Job replies to Eliphaz.

1. But Job answered and said,
2. Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!
3. For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore, my words are swallowed up.

The starting point in Job's reply is the greatness of his grief, which he feels that his friends have by no means fully appreciated, and hence have been strangely wanting in sympathy.—“Oh that my griefs were thoroughly weighed”, some explain as a wish that grief were a thing to be weighed so as to test precisely its real severity. But it falls in better with the case in hand to regard it as a wish that these friends could and would estimate it justly. This must be his ultimate meaning, for this is the thing he so ardently desired.—It becomes a question whether the word “together” means *all* his individual sorrows, put in and weighed in one mass; or, taking “calamity” in the sense of complaint, making this the ultimate meaning: Oh that my griefs might be put in one scale and my complaints in the opposite, to see if the complaints outweigh the griefs. The latter construction might be admissible possibly if the word for calamity would bear the meaning complaint—but it can not. Moreover, the point at issue is not whether Job complains overmuch, beyond what such sufferings justify; but whether his sufferings are or are not the exact index of his sins.—If my griefs were thoroughly weighed, they would be heavier than the sands of the sea—this strong expression being oriental in character. But Job manifestly felt that no figures could exaggerate his griefs.—Therefore have my words been *rash*, extreme. I am sensible of the fact that they have been rash, and this is my apology.—Our English “swallowed up” derives the Hebrew word from a root which is now generally rejected.* Our English word would seem to mean—My words have gone for nothing, have proved utterly worthless; but this makes no sense pertinent to the context or the case.

4. For the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

That which made Job's sufferings so appalling and unendurable was the manifest hand of God in them. How could he bear this? The poison of those arrows when seen coming from

(* Viz., from לָיַע; but modern critics from לָיַץ.)

the hand of the Almighty, drank up his spirits; swallowed up all his manly courage, all his endurance. The terrors of God all in array against him as for battle, broke down his very soul.

5. Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?

6. Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt? or is there *any* taste in the white of an egg?

7. The things *that* my soul refused to touch *are* as my sorrowful meat.

On these verses the work of the interpreter (as usual) is twofold: (a) To determine precisely what the speaker says; to reach the exact sense of his several words; and (b) To ascertain their intended application and bearing in his argument.—Under the first head critics have differed as to the meaning of the very unusual Hebrew word translated “the white of an egg”—some giving it the sense of *purslain broth*—a most tasteless, insipid herb. The older authorities, *e. g.* the Targums and the Rabbins, give the former. The Arabic translators have been supposed to favor the latter. This point, however, is of small consequence.—As to the second and far more vital question—What is the bearing of these verses upon Job’s argument? I understand his thought to be of this sort:—All sentient beings, even the lower animals, have a voice for their sorrows. They never moan and cry save from a sense of suffering and want. Think not of me that I should pour forth wailings of sorrow, if there were no sorrow in my soul. These wails are as really the cries of my nature as the call of the wild ass or the ox for food in his hunger.—From this thought, Job passes easily to speak (v. 6) of his friends as professing or attempting to minister to his hunger by giving him tasteless or insipid food; or, (as in v. 7) things that offend his stomach, and bring on nausea and vomiting. The consolations they offer to him in his heart-hunger turn his stomach to loathing. A better translation of v. 7 is that of Conant:—“My soul refuses to touch! They are as food that I loathe”! He says this of the food offered him by his friends when his nature cries like that of the ox for relief from gnawing pain.

8. Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant *me* the thing that I long for!

9. Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!

10. Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow; let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.

These deeply impassioned utterances were provoked by a sense of the severity of his friends. It is not strange that Job’s heart was torn and bleeding, nor that he should be tempted to look

wishfully to death for relief.—The English translation of v. 10 imputes to Job a spirit of hardihood and daring toward God of which his real words are innocent and for which they are not responsible. Job did not mean to say that he would harden his heart under his griefs, nor did he challenge the Almighty to lay on as he would and not spare! The more accurate translation of his words will much relieve his utterances of these extreme sentiments—thus: If God were to cut short my life, it should still be my comfort, and I would exult, even under unsparing agony, that I have not denied the words of the Holy One.—A consciousness of having honored the known words of his Maker and sought to walk before him accordingly should be more than mere comfort—should be even his exultant joy under the bitterest of mortal agonies. The sense—agony that does not or will not spare (instead of “Let him not spare”) is certainly admissible. It being admitted, we need not understand Job as having his thought specially upon God—much less, as challenging him to inflict torture without mercy!—And the sense “harden myself” for the Heb. verb* so rendered here in our version, finds not the least support in the modern Heb. Lexicons of Gesenius or of Fuerst. In extant Hebrew it occurs here only; but its Arabic analogies determine its meaning—to leap up, to bound with exultation.—In v. 9 the conception is that God’s firm hand upon him sustains his life, so that loosing that hand would be to cut short his life in death.

11. What *is* my strength, that I should hope? And what *is* mine end, that I should prolong my life?

12. *Is* my strength the strength of stones? or *is* my flesh of brass? ✓

13. *Is* not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?

14. To him that is afflicted, pity *should be shewed* from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.

In vs. 13, 14, we must modify our Eng. version materially; thus (v. 13) “Is there not an absence—a negation—of all help in myself? Is not recovery (a reinstatement in my former well-being) quite driven from me?”—In v. 14, “Kindness is due from his friend to one broken down,” *i. e.*, in hope and strength, and ready to forsake the fear of the Almighty; tempted, and almost on the verge of such forsaking of God. Such a man, if he has a friend on earth, needs and has a right to claim his tenderest sympathy. Ah indeed, most truly! But Job goes on from this point to charge his friends, then present, with utterly disappointing his reasonable expectations in this respect.

In v. 11, 12, Job says that his endurance is almost exhausted. Physically he can bear but little more; and probably he would say that, morally, spiritually, his soul was quivering on the verge of utter prostration. These points in their relation to what pre-

cedes are put as reasons why he looks to death for relief.—Advancing in his line of thought, he suggests that his extremity of weakness and need ought to draw forth in his behalf the deep sympathy of his friends; but, alas! this fails him!

15. My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, *and* as the stream of brooks they pass away;

16. Which are blackish by reason of the ice, *and* wherein the snow is hid:

17. What time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.

My brethren fail me and disappoint my hopes as the streams of the desert disappoint the caravans and leave them to perish for lack of water.—Some of the phrases in this passage should have an improved translation; thus—(last clause of v. 15) “As the valley-streams which themselves pass away:” not “they” (my brethren) “pass away.” Streams that are blackish, turbid, when the ice and snow from the mountains swell them to torrents; but when they have thus poured themselves off in floods—the high waters of spring—they suddenly fail. Not—“when they wax warm”—but when they have poured themselves off rapidly in floods—then they cease to run. The point of comparison is, they lack stability, permanence. One spring freshet—then, through all the hot summer, dry.

18. The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish.

19. The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.

20. They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.

Here the Eng. version erroneously translates the same Heb. word “paths” in v. 18, and “troops” in v. 19,—whereas in both cases the sense is *caravans*, traveling companies, crossing the Arabian deserts. They turn from their direct course to strike and follow up these old water channels; they march up into utter wastes, waterless and desolate—and there perish. These caravans of Tema and Sheba looked for water there with expectation and hope, but were bitterly put to shame and confounded by reason of such trust and its utter failure in their great need. So Job’s hopes of sympathy and moral succor from his friends had left him to shame and confusion.

21. For now ye are nothing; ye see *my* casting down, and are afraid.

22. Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance?

23. Or, Deliver me from the enemy’s hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?

For now ye too, like these desert-streams, have become nothing, "Ye see a terror"—a case of suffering that shocks and amazes: and ye seem to shrink back in dismay. But look again into my ease. Consider what I am asking of you. Is it your wealth, as if to supply the loss of mine? Or is it deliverance from some threatened violence? No such thing at all.

24. Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

25. How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?

26. Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, *which are* as wind?

27. Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a *pit* for your friend.

The thing I do want and do ask of you, is moral counsel, real advice. Show me wherein I have erred. Set me right as toward God. Such fitting words would be above all price.—But what does your upbraiding prove, and what does it avail? Do ye propose to rebuke my words when ye should know that the words of one driven to desperation are only as the wind?—Job thinks they should not criticise his rash utterances so severely, which indeed had been forced from his lips by his terrible sufferings and by being brought so nigh to utter despair. Ye might as well cast lots for orphans—to part them among you as slaves—or dig a pit-fall for your friend.—I understand Job to compare the cruel, heartless course of his friends toward himself with these flagrant violations of friendship and right.

28. Now therefore be content, look upon me: for *it is* evident unto you if I lie.

29. Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, my righteousness is in it.

30. Is there iniquity in my tongue? can not my taste discern perverse things?

Job moves for a reconsideration of his case.—"And now, consent;" yield to my request; look upon me in my case once more, for I will not speak falsely to your face. (I will deal honestly: ah, I am too near my grave to deal otherwise!) Return, I pray; let there be no perverse views, nothing false or misconceived. Yea, return; for yet my righteousness is in it—which I take to mean—my uprightness, my integrity, is in the case and must yet appear.—Have I said aught that was false? Can ye suppose I have lost my moral sense so that I can can not discriminate right from wrong?—The views they had taken of his case seemed to Job to assume that his words were false and his moral sentiments perverse. He begs them to reconsider the case and withdraw these tacit or avowed implications.

CHAPTER VII.

Conclusion of Job's reply.

Job concludes his speech, recounting his sorrows, discoursing upon the shortness of human life and especially of that portion which lay yet before himself, and passionately, not to say complainingly, entreats that God would lighten his too heavy hand, forgive his sins, and grant him yet one quiet, peaceful hour before he shall go hence.

1. *Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of a hireling?*
2. As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as a hireling looketh for *the reward of his work*;
3. So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.
4. When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.

The Heb. word for "appointed time" is used often of a term of service in war; also of the designated term of temple service assigned to the Levites. So man has a very limited period for his life-service on this earth. As the servant longs for the fast lengthening shadows which shortly precede sun-setting—his signal for closing a weary day's toil,—so, says Job, am I made to inherit months of vanity—empty of all good and full of pain; nights also, not of rest in sleep, but of perpetual tossings because of pain. Ah, how true to the experience of the sick sufferer, saying as he lays himself down to court sleep—"When shall I arise and the night be gone?"

5. My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome.
6. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.

The skin disease described here under which Job was suffering was very unlike the modern boil. Fortunately for us it is unknown to human experience in our climate and country.—"Clothed with worms"—but critics differ as to the sense here of the word for "worms." Some say *rottenness*; others, *ulcers*; and yet others, *mold*. The usual sense is no doubt, *worms*. The phrase—"clods of dust"—aims to give its resemblance. Of an ashy color, and corrugated with ridges and lumps as if it were a plowed field of half broken clods.—My skin cracks and discharges matter—which indicates somewhat the nature of his disease.—The bitter thing in these swiftly passing days was that

they came and went, but neither found in him nor brought to him any hope of relief.

7. O remember that my life is wind ; mine eye shall no more see good.

8. The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more : thine eyes *are* upon me, and I *am* not.

9. As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away ; so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.

10. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.

O remember that my life is but a breath—so soon past and gone ! Here again we see Job despairing of more good on earth. Death will soon take him hence—to return no more. Alas, he must soon be missed and even forgotten amid the scenes and surroundings of his now present life. Not only will the passing generations of men cease to know him ; they are themselves moving on and away ;—but even the old localities—the hills and the streams he once frequented and loved, and with which he seemed to hold a sort of heart-communion—even they, enduring as they are, will know him no more ! They catch the glow of his eye, the pressure of his step, the inspirations of his presence—no more at all forever. This great fact pertaining to the dead is here put in most impressive, memorable words. How forcibly are they confirmed by all human experience !

11. Therefore I will not refrain my mouth ; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit ; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

12. *Am* I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me ?

13. When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint ;

14. Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions :

15. So that my soul chooseth strangling, *and* death rather than my life.

Not “therefore,” which the original by no means admits, but this:—“Also, as for myself, I for my part, will not shut my mouth. The anguish of my spirit compels me to speak.”—“Am I a sea?”—unreliable, uncertain, boisterous—the sea being a natural emblem of pride, fickleness, instability.—Or am I a sea-monster?—the word more naturally suggesting the great sea-serpent than the whale.—Am I in character, like either of these, that thou shouldst set a watch over me?—V. 15, last clause, should read—“My soul chooseth death rather than these bones”—indicating that either pain in them or emaciation made them prominent to his thought.—Frightful dreams by night and in-

supportable depression of spirits by day, were among the fruits of this terrible disease. Under these sufferings and horrors, no wonder Job should choose to die of strangling rather than live on under such torture.

16. I loathe it; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days *are* vanity.

17. What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?

18. And *that* thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?

19. How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?

The primary sense of the verb translated "*loathe*" is to *waste away*, and this should be preferred here.—The next clause is the simple future:—"I *shall not live* alway."—Therefore desist from me; leave me for a little moment at peace:—which we must understand as addressed to God. For my days are a breath and this only; therefore let me have a few moments of rest before I go hence.—Then Job falls back upon his own insignificance and littleness as a reason for his plea that God would withdraw his sharp eye and leave him for the moment exempt from the horrors of such a sense of rebuke and divine indignation. What is man that thou shouldest make so much of him, set thy thought so sharply upon him, visit him in thy watchfulness every morning, try him with such sufferings as mine every moment? How long ere thou wilt look away from me; take off thine eye from me, and let me alone till I can take my breath—this last phrase being analogous to the more oriental one—"swallow my spittle."

20. I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?

21. And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I *shall not be*.

Conant translates—"If I sin, what do I unto Thee"—*i. e.*, of what great consequence can it be to thee, and how can it be a reason for visiting me so severely? The literal and proper sense of the Heb. words is put in our English version: "I have sinned; what shall I do to Thee?" Yet the scope of thought in the words that follow favors the sense given by Conant.—Why hast thou made me thy mark—the target for thy sharp arrows—so making me a burden insupportable to myself? The underlying implication here is—Why does the great God treat me *so*? How shall I account for this apparent severity?—These were among the rash and foolish words of this tried and impatient sufferer, for which, when he came to see God better, he humbled himself and

repented in dust and ashes.—“O Thou preserver of men,” should rather be read—O Thou *observer* of men—Thou who dost watch so closely, so sharply—for such is here the course of Job’s thought.—Then, with far less humility and conscious unworthiness than was meet, he almost impatiently demands that God should pardon his iniquities and should do it *soon*, for he had but little more time to live, and soon God could no longer find him among the living though he were to seek never so earnestly. This verb—to seek—most often takes the secondary sense—not precisely of seeking *in the morning*, but of seeking *earnestly*—this earnestness being indicated by being up betimes for it in the morning.

Thus Job allows the severity of his sufferings to wring from his heart and to force through his lips these impassioned complaints and daring implications of the Great God! No wonder that when in the result God came so impressively near in the glory of his majesty, Job was smitten with contrition and abased himself in the dust! That ultimate humiliation and confession, set over against these daring, not to say false and foul charges against God, constitute some of the great moral lessons of this book.



CHAPTER VIII.

Bildad speaks in his turn.

Bildad the second disputant comes forward in this chapter with one fundamental doctrine, viz., that God’s administration is absolutely righteous and complete, and can never fall below this standard even in the present world. Hence judgments follow sins and are graduated to the enormity of the sin they are sent to punish. Job therefore must be a great sinner inasmuch as he is a great sufferer. There can be no hope for him save in repentance and returning to God. Bildad appeals to history—to the voice of all the fathers—for proof that God blesses the righteous, but visits judgment on the wicked.

1. Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
2. How long wilt thou speak these *things*? and *how long shall* the words of thy mouth *be like* a strong wind?

It is the human nature of disputants in sharp controversy to indulge in retort that cuts deep—as here: “the words of thy mouth a strong wind”—as void of thought; as incessant and tumultuous, putting sound for sense.—In Bildad, this was at once heartless and unreasonable. We marvel that he could so utterly lack sympathy with his suffering friend. His philosophy

of the case impressed him so strongly that Job must be the greatest of sinners, and all his professed piety only egregious hypocrisy, that his heart could not and would not open to the appeals of sympathy with those outbursts of impassioned grief.

3. Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?

This lays down his fundamental doctrine in the strongest form—that of a question which assumes its point as above all dispute or doubt—the point being that *God never can pervert the right—never can swerve from inherent, perfect justice.*

Remarkably, the logic of the doctrine seems to be an inference from God's almightiness, corresponding to the argument as put by Abraham (Gen. 18: 25): "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right"? But was this a purely logical inference, deducing the rectitude of God from his infinite resources of power, on the principle that such a God can have no conceivable motive for injustice; or was it rather an intuition of the reason—that the Supreme God must be perfect in goodness and therefore in justice as truly as infinite in power and sway over his own universe?

4. If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression;

5. If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty;

6. If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.

7. Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.

The word "if" here (in v. 4) does not imply in the speaker's mind the least doubt as to the *fact* that Job's sons had sinned. "*Though*" would give his thought more precisely.—"And God have cast them away for their transgression"—is put in the Hebrew very suggestively—thus: And God hath thrown them *into the hand* of their transgression, *i. e.*, for punishment, as if the very sin they had committed were armed with power to punish. Thus certainly in the view of the speaker must suffering follow sinning, as if sin were made self-avenging—always mighty to visit retribution upon the sinner who commits the sin.—Even then (he proceeds to say) if *thou* thyself (making the word *thou* emphatic)—if *thou* as their father wouldest seek earnestly unto God and make supplication to the Almighty; and then, moreover, if thou wert pure and upright (which I fear is far from being the case)—but if thou shouldest come back to purity by penitence and humiliation before God, surely even now, desperate as thy case has become, God would rouse himself up in thy behalf and make thy righteous dwelling-place again prosperous. This, on the supposition that thy dwelling-place shall be-

come a righteous one.—Then, though thy beginnings were small—though thy prosperity should start from the lowest possible point, yet thy latter end should be exceeding great. Remarkably Bildad foretold sagaciously the latter end of the Lord's actual dealings with Job.

8. For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers :

9. (For *we are but of yesterday*, and know nothing, because our days upon earth *are a shadow* :)

10. Shall not they teach thee, *and* tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?

For the proof of his positions Bildad appeals first to the voice of history. Go back to former generations; search out the testimony of their fathers. Personally *we* have lived but as it were a day—only since yesterday; our observation therefore is all too limited to become a basis for such a generalization. But the fathers—those ancient men whose lives stretched over centuries—they have marked the ways of God's providence through long ages and they must know. Will not they give you honest words, from their simple hearts? such words as these, which he proceeds to recite.

11. Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?

12. Whilst it *is* yet in his greenness, *and* not cut down, it withereth before any *other* herb.

13. So *are* the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish:

14. Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust *shall be* a spider's web.

They will tell you that effects follow their proper causes; as you see it in vegetable growths, so you may see it in the moral world—retribution follows sin. The paper-rush ("papyrus") grows not except in marshy soil, *e. g.* close along the banks of the Nile; the flag—the same that hid the little ark of the child Moses on the margin of the Nile, grows not without water. But, the water failing, these plants wither and die, even without being cut at all. So are the paths of all who forget God. Losing God's favor, they perish no less surely than these Nile growths when their waters fail.—Let it be noted incidentally that these allusions to the well-known grasses and growths on the Nile banks bear witness that the writer was familiar with Egypt. Should it seem strange that Moses (if really the writer of this book) should remember his mother's story of the flags by the river's brink that hid her boy so safely?—The Hebrew word translated "hypocrite" should not be restricted to the common sense of this English word—one who falsely professes more piety than he has—but should have the broader sense—the godless, impious, morally polluted man.

15. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand : he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.

16. He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.

17. His roots are wrapped about the heap, *and* seeth the place of stones.

18. If he destroy him from his place, then *it* shall deny him, *saying*, I have not seen thee.

19. Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow.

The description of the wicked man's adversity continues. He may lean upon his house as upon something firm enough to support a man resting against it, but the house itself falls; he may hold fast upon it (better than "hold *it* fast"), but it endures not, and therefore himself must fall.—Again comparing the sinner to some vegetable growth—he flourishes for a short season, green and fresh in the presence of the sun—his roots penetrating the stony soil and making themselves fast and firm there (v. 17); but (v. 18) when he shall be destroyed (literally this is impersonal) — when one, or something shall destroy him from his place, this destruction shall be so utter that his very place shall deny him and seem to say, "I have not seen thee. No such man ever lived here." Lo, mark it; this is the highest joy the sinner can reach; so short is his prosperity; thus utter is the ruin that swallows him up and roots out his very name and memorial! Other and better men come up at once to fill the place he held for his brief moment.

20. Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers :

21. Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.

22. They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling-place of the wicked shall come to nought.

To another point give your attention. Mark this; God never spurns the upright—never rejects him as with loathing; nor on the other side, does he ever grasp the hand of evil-working men to sustain them in their wickedness. If thou art truly good, God will carry out this principle of blessing the virtuous with prosperity (v. 21) till "he fills thy mouth with laughter," etc.

Thus Bildad's scheme of the divine administration in this life has no place for calamity to touch the good man, nor any scope for prosperity to smile on the wicked. All this seems to him a resistless inference from God's justice. However it may fit, it must be made to apply to the case in hand—poor Job, stripped of children and property; stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. If his sins have been correspondingly great, what a monster in crime and vileness he must have been!

CHAPTER IX.

Job commences his reply to Bildad.

The great discussion has now reached its deep places. Job's sensibilities are powerfully moved. Struggling between a consciousness of sincerity in the main as a true servant of the Most High, and a feeling of dark uncertainty as to the reasons why God was afflicting him so fearfully; longing to know what those reasons might be, and yet deeply aware of the majesty, the glory, the power as well as the purity of the Infinite God, he anxiously presses the question—Is it possible for me to have a fair hearing before him? Can I hope ever to obtain from him an explanation of these dark ways of his providence toward me?—In this chapter he turns over and over the great points that bear on this question, and gives large scope to the feelings that well up in his troubled soul.

1. Then Job answered and said,
2. I know *it is* so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?

3. If he will contend with him, he can not answer him one of a thousand.

“Of a truth I know it is so:” You say God is righteous and can never pervert justice. My deepest convictions affirm the same; this doctrine must stand. No mortal can sustain himself as righteous in an issue made on this point against the Almighty Ruler. How can man prove himself just with (*i. e.*, before) God?—In v. 3—“If he (God) will contend”—should rather be—*wills* to contend—if He should choose to join issue with a mere creature, this creature could not answer to God for one count out of a thousand in the great indictment; *i. e.*, man could make out nothing at all in a case of controversy with God.

4. *He is* wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened *himself* against him, and hath prospered?

5. Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger;

6. Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble:

God being all-wise and all-powerful as well, who can withstand him and be secure—*i. e.*, and still have peace and safety? The welfare and destiny of every creature are so perfectly under his control, what can it avail any proud mortal to take a stand against the Infinite God?—“Who removeth mountains and they know not”—means—not that they are unconscious of being moved, but that it is done with such infinite ease and facility and of course so suddenly that *ere they are aware*, they are upturned from their deep

foundations. The speaker thinks of the fearful earthquake by which the granite mountains are shaken and even hurled out of their place.—The ancient notion that the earth is supported upon pillars appears here as we might expect—this being the current thought of those times. (See 1 Sam. 2: 8 and Job 38: 4, 6 and Prov. 8: 29 and Ps. 104: 5.)

7. Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars;

8. Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea;

9. Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south;

10. Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.

Who speaks to the sun and it shines not—this being the sense rather than his rising—the speaker's thought being apparently upon the eclipse as shutting off the sun's rays. In like manner he can seal up the stars that their light shall not reach us.—“Who spreadeth out the heavens”—in the sense of creating the vast expanse of sky, called in scripture “the firmament.” He does this of himself alone, with no aid from the creatures he has made. Who in his majesty treads upon the heights of the sea (its highest and proudest billows); who made the great constellations here named—always very prominent objects in the starry heavens. “The chambers of the south”—the word rather signifying the *secret* chambers, with allusion to the little known constellations of the remote southern hemisphere. All those glories of the starry sky are but the handiwork of the Almighty, whose works are great beyond our searching out and whose wonderful doings defy all enumeration.

11. Lo, he goeth by me, and I see *him* not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.

12. Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?

His person invisible to mortal eye, his presence is known by the wonderful works he achieves. How then should a weak mortal stand in awe before him!—“Lo, (v. 12), he taketh away”—but the Hebrew suggests rather this intensive thought:—“he *seizes*,” as the lion does his prey: “who then can *turn him back*”—stay his hand; reverse his doings? Who shall dare call him to account as to any of his deeds?

13. *If* God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.

14. How much less shall I answer him, *and* choose out my words *to reason* with him?

The Hebrew does not say “*if*,” the real sentiment is better

expressed without it.—God will not turn back his anger—the same word for “turn back” as in the first clause of v. 12 (Eng. “hinder”). The sentiment—When God has occasion for anger, no mortal arm can withstand. So the next clause implies; “proud helpers bow”—fall low—before (underneath) it. These “helpers” are supposed to proffer their help to some poor mortal *against God*. Though proud of their prowess, they are laid low before his dreadful arm.—Should *I* then—such an one as I in my weakness (Heb. makes the word *I* emphatic) essay to answer him—choose out fitting words for debate with him? Before such awful majesty, what could my presence or my words of argument avail?

15. Whom, though I were righteous, *yet* would I not answer, *but* I would make supplication to my judge.

16. If I had called, and he had answered me; *yet* would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.

17. For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.

18. He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness.

Even if my cause were just, I would attempt no answer in vindication of myself. I would only supplicate my Judge for his mercy—falling back in humblest mood upon prayer.—Here let the reader note how pertinently Job thinks of God as his judge, and therefore not as one who could stand on a common level with himself before some court higher than either of the parties in litigation. In Job's case God must be thought of, not as one party summoned to appear and answer to some charge, but simply as the Infinite Judge himself.—Even if I were to call and he were to answer—“call” and “answer” being forensic terms employed in suits at law, where the complainant calls, summoning the accused to appear, and he makes answer. Even if He were to make such answer I could not believe my own ears—could not believe that he had stooped so low as to regard my call and propose to meet me in the forms of judicial trial. I could not believe this, “for” (in the Hebrew “who”)—*i. e.*, of one “who dashes me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds for no good cause” which I can understand. How can I suppose that one who deals thus with me will submit to a legal investigation with me as to the equity of his dealings? So quick in succession are his blows I can not even take my breath between. (See the story in chapt. I)——“Filleth me with bitterness”—not here of the spirit—the feelings of the heart, but of bodily pangs.

19. If *I speak* of strength, lo, *he is* strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?

20. If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if *I say* I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.

21. *Though* I were perfect, *yet* would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.

The original words here are strikingly concise and abrupt, indicating intense agitation—emotion beyond his power to control:—put as nearly in literal corresponding terms as our language will allow—thus: If as to strength, lo, He is mighty: if as to judgment, who will appoint me the day for a hearing? *i. e.*, before the court.*—In v. 20, our English version supplies quite too much that is not indicated at all in the original. It is far more safe to take the Hebrew in its simple, obvious sense—thus: “Though I were righteous, my mouth would condemn me; perfect I—then He would hold me as perverse.” This last verb in this hiphil conjugation, might, under the various usage of this form, be translated variously;—either *treat* me as perverse; *show* me to be so; or *make* me so. The nature of the case seems to require one of the two former rather than the latter.—Then v. 21 may read thus: “Perfect I—I should not know my soul; I should think little of my life.”—In the Hebrew phrase for “*know my soul*,” usage favors, not conscious self-knowledge, but *regard for one’s life*, as in Prov. 12: 10—the same words: “The righteous man *knoweth the life* of his beast; *i. e.*, regardeth its happiness. The next clause, being parallel, demands this construction—I should not value my life. Overawed, overwhelmed before him, how could I deem my very life of the least account?—In the violent conflict of emotion throughout this passage, I take the over-mastering thought to be not so much consciousness of guilt before God (like that which Job expresses in 42: 5, 6) as a blended feeling—awe and dread of God’s majesty and power with agonizing perplexity as to the reasons for God’s sore inflictions upon himself. This view of the thought best accords with the words thus far used, and especially, with those that follow.—Interpreting this passage we are to inquire—not how Job *ought* to have felt but how he *did* feel, as judged of by his words.

22. This is one *thing*, therefore, I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

In Heb. “This is one”—which it would seem must mean—this one thing is sure; of this there can be no doubt; therefore I said—“He consumes righteous and wicked:” sending his afflictions upon them, irrespective of moral character. Often (at least) both suffer at his hand alike. So these words should mean; and so the drift of the following context requires.

23. If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.

24. The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, *and* who is he?

“When the scourge kills suddenly,” he mocks (“seems to make no account of) the distress of the innocent.” So it certainly

* A case of the same verb in the same sense occurs, Jer. 49: 19.

seems to us when an earthquake engulphs a whole city. Or when (as often) God suffers the wicked to come into great power and they rule the earth at their will, making fearful havoc of human well-being. The face of human judges he seems to veil so that they are practically blind to justice and administer law to the great detriment of society. If this may not be ascribed to God—at least to his permissive agency, *who does it?* and *where* is the permissive or controlling power? The facts are as I say; who is responsible? The world is full of evil, this evil falling on righteous men as well as on wicked men. Who can deny this; or who explain?

The reader will observe that here Job squarely confronts the doctrine of his three friends, which is that God's administration of good and ill in the present life is always and perfectly according to their respective deserts—always *as* their moral good or evil. Job insists that God's judgments fall on men—at least in some cases—with no regard to their character as innocent or guilty, virtuous or vicious. Nor let us fail to notice the agitation and terror of Job which appear in his broken words, reflecting his tremulous tones. Was it not painful to him to think so of God and to be driven to these startling utterances by the force of what seemed to him to be obvious facts?

25. Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good.

26. They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle *that* hasteth to the prey.

27. If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort *myself*:

28. I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.

Here appears one element in Job's sense of weakness and frailty—the fleetness of his days and the apparent hopelessness of any change for the better while he lives.

"Swifter than a *post*"—"post" in the old English sense of a mail-carrier, or a runner who bears tidings. So my days *have* fled—(not merely *are* fleeing)—and have seen no (abiding) good. They have passed by as reed-skiffs, the light vessels of papyrus that move swiftly on the Nile. [The writer shows himself familiar with scenes and facts of Egyptian life.] Or (another figure) as the flight of an eagle darting down upon his prey.

If I say to myself—Let me forget my complaining; let me put off this sad face and put on a brighter one—the exact sense of the Hebrew—"then I shudder at all my sorrows"; they are fastened upon me, and the very thought of an effort to throw them off recoils upon me with a sense of utter despair; and more still, it reminds me that these woes come upon me *from God*, and that he will not hold me innocent. Alas, that I can not know why!

29. *If* I be wicked, why then labor I in vain?

30. If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean;

31. Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.

Here again the Hebrew gives no word for "*if*." It also makes the word *I* emphatic. *I* for my part; I, perhaps alone or above other men, am held to be wicked, being obviously treated as such. Why then shall I labor in vain for relief or redress?—"Though I wash myself with soft snow-water and cleanse my hands with alkali (soap), yet Thou wilt plunge me into the pit", etc.—These deeply impassioned words—words, it must be admitted, of severe reflection upon God, it were wrong to attempt to justify. We may perhaps say—They show how for a time the ways of God toward him appeared in his eye. He could not see that he above all other men had deserved such terrible sufferings. It may have seemed to him that God was imputing to him crimes of which, in comparison with other more wicked yet far happier men, he was not consciously guilty. The author aims to show how a good man—good in a general but not in the perfect sense—might be agonized so long as he tried to apply to his own case the doctrine that the sufferings of this life are the exact measure of men's sins. Applied to good men who really value the approval of God and are agonized under his apparent displeasure, the doctrine is shown to be utterly and terribly impracticable—too impracticable, too harassing, to be true.

32. For *he is* not a man, as *I am*, *that* I should answer him, *and* we should come together in judgment.

33. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, *that* might lay his hand upon us both.

If God were a man like myself, we might meet on common ground and I would ask him wherefore he sent upon me these crushing sorrows; or if there were any mediator ("daysman") between us, capable (the word signifies) of rebuking us, either or both, then we might have the question at issue fairly heard and adjusted.

34. Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me.

35. *Then* would I speak, and not fear him; but *it is* not so with me.

If he would remove his rod from upon me and not let the fear of him overawe me, then I would speak and not fear him; for I am restrained, not so much by a consciousness that I am all wrong and really deserve these inflictions, as by the dread of his majesty and power. I am restrained less by what I see in myself than by what I see and dread in the Almighty God.—The

passage is difficult. This sense is suggested as most in harmony with the words themselves and with the general drift of thought throughout the context.



CHAPTER X.

Job's speech concluded.

1. My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

2. I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.

The word, my "soul," is slightly stronger than to have said *I*, since it implies that his deepest sensibilities were in this weariness of life. He *felt* that such a life was a sore burden. —The English version of the next clause is by no means clear. Job means—I will give full scope to my complaining—to the outpouring of my sorrows: I will speak out all my sad heart. Let me speak, pressed by this bitterness of my soul.—V. 2. expresses the feeling that was uppermost and strongest in his heart. He did long to know why God seemed to be thus contending with him, pushing a controversy, as his word signifies. It was all a mystery to his mind. O might he only know!

3. *Is it* good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?

Is it for one moment to be supposed that God enjoys the oppressing of his own creature; that he cares little or nothing for one who is the workmanship of his own hand; and, that, moreover, he should seem to approve the counsels of wicked men—in which words he tacitly implies that God connives at the slanders which the wicked were insinuating against him as now proving himself to be one of the worst of men. His thought may have been on these heartless but professed friends of his.

4. Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth?

5. *Are* thy days as the days of man? *are* thy years as man's days,

6. That thou inquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin?

7. Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and *there is* none that can deliver out of thine hand.

Can it be (Job would say) that God takes the false view of my

case and character that my friends have taken in this debate: and is God subject to such mistaken judgments as are common to short-lived man? Is it for any such reason that God sets himself to search so sharply and persistently for my sin, *although* (first word of v. 7) although "thou knowest I am not a wicked man (in the sense they claim), and although, moreover, thy judgment on my case is of infinite moment to me, for none can deliver from thine hand. The sentence thou shalt pass upon me must be final—must forever control my future destiny. O let it, then, be a righteous one!

8. Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me.

9. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?

10. Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese?

11. Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.

12. Thou hast granted me life and favor, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

13. And these *things* hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this *is* with thee.

"Together round about" means only—*in every part*—so that I am wholly and absolutely of thy workmanship;—and yet wilt thou destroy the work of thine own hands?—"Made me as the clay"—*i. e.*, as the clay is molded by the potter into whatever form he will—which expression moreover, starting with the point of similarity in the mode and a like perfect *control*, seems to have suggested the further point—made out of earth as to the material; for he asks, Wilt thou resolve me back to the same dust again?—V. 10 gives the same thought under another figure.—In v. 11 "fenced" is not so much, protected with defensive armor, as *interlaced*, knit together, and made strong and firm with bones and sinews.—In v. 12, "thy visitation" is what we express by the word "providence"—thy perpetual oversight and protection. This Job says has kept me in life—a life of general enjoyment.—All these things hast thou done for me not of unthoughtful impulse, but of deliberate purpose, a purpose deep hidden in thy heart. I know that such has been thy mind toward me. And Job seems to imply that it is to him all the more strange that one who has made him with so much skill and watched over him with so much care, should now turn upon him to break down and destroy the work of his own hands.

14. If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.

15. If I be wicked, woe unto me; and *if* I be righteous,

yet will I not lift up my head. *I am* full of confusion ; therefore see thou mine affliction ;

16. For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion : and again thou shewest thyself marvelous upon me.

17. Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me ; changes and war *are* against me.

No fond partiality for the work of his own hands abates at all from the searching scrutiny with which God notes and punishes moral obliquity. Does this appear strange to Job, or does he design only to indicate that this scrutiny seems to him in his own ease to be severe, pushed to an extent which he can not well account for ?

"If I be righteous, I may not—dare not—lift up my head"—so overwhelmed am I with the sense of being crushed beneath his inflictions.—The English version (last clause of v. 15 and first of v. 16), fails to give the sense of the Hebrew. Better thus—"full of shame and the sight of my sufferings!" *i. e.*, confounded by this sight and sense of my sufferings. "If it rise up"—*i. e.*, if my head is lifted up with some sense of conscious innocence, then thou dost hunt me as the fierce lion hunts his prey.—"Thy witnesses" are the manifest indications of God's displeasure, which come with fresh power and frequency, with host succeeding host, one battalion after another as with charging squadrons on the field of battle. One of the Heb. words gives us the idea of a martial host; the other, of a hot succession of assaults. The sense I take to be—I am full of confusion as I see my sufferings (v. 15) and the more so because I am compelled to think of them as from God's hand!—The Heb. verb for "increaseth" (v. 16) means, to be or become high; and best refers to lifting up his head, as above. If I say, I will bear all bravely and raise my head with heroic fortitude, then it becomes a new mark for the arrows of the Almighty; he comes down upon me as the lion leaps, upon his prey; more and more marvelous and astounding become his visitations of sorrow upon sorrow.

18. Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!

19. I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.

Here is the same thought essentially as in chap. 3, where Job so emphatically and plaintively cursed the day of his birth, and wished, (O how imploringly!) that he had never been! Why, he asks, should God give existence at all to one who exists only to suffer? If God had but let me perish from the womb, and no human eye had seen a throb of life, then I should be as if I had never been—should never have seen the light of life and so never have known these agonies beyond endurance:

20. *Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little,*

21. *Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death;*

22. *A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.*

But it is vain to wish and pray against what *is* and can not cease to be. Yet my days at the utmost must be few. Let me therefore pray that God would arrest these terrible inflictions, withdraw his too heavy hand, and let my face brighten up (Heb.) for one brief moment, before I go and not return—go to that realm of utter darkness—that chaos of all desolation where even the light is but darkness itself!

This description of the under-world—the realm of the dead—is, in every point of view, remarkable, and naturally starts in our minds many interesting questions. Does Job speak according to the thought of his times current then? Is this realm of darkness the home of lost souls only, or of all human souls; and is it conceived of as only an intermediate state (between death and the final resurrection and judgment) beyond which is to be another state of existence? Does Job think of this “darkness” as retribution for sin—real punishment, and the very doom of lost, unpardoned souls? Or is it mostly a state of unconsciousness—this darkness practically shutting off the activities and thought-workings of life?—And yet further; how much, if at all, are the dark shadings of this picture due to the exaggerations of oriental poetry? How much, if any thing, must be attributed to images thrown forward by a certain power of self-projection, from his dark present, to make the future no less dark and dismal?

Each one of these several points seems to me worthy of attention. As I think of them, I am impressed with the conviction that the human mind in that age and country, having but the least possible light from revelation on the great future beyond the grave, was shut up mainly to this sense of *darkness* in the state of human souls there, and especially so when the present was to them almost hopelessly dark and hence threw forward only dark foreshadowings upon that unknown world. To them, He who ultimately came as “the Light of the world,” had not yet appeared to “bring life and immortality to light.” Some gleams of light fell on the patriarchs who learned during their earthly life to “walk with God.” A portion of the light and joy of such walking would naturally be reflected forward into that little known realm beyond the grave. It can not be supposed that their anticipated future was wholly buried under such dense and unrelieved darkness as Job here portrays.

CHAPTER XI.

Speech of Zophar.

1. Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,
2. Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?
3. Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?

Shall a man's words be deemed unanswerable because they are innumerable? Must we desist from all attempt to reply because thy words are so copious? Or, shall a man of lips (Heb.) be deemed just in his cause by virtue of his loquacity? Shall thy vain boasts (better than "lies") put men to silence, and then shalt thou mock on, and none put thee to shame?—These cruel, heartless taunts upon Job make not the least allowance for his terrible sufferings; manifest not the slightest sympathy with a soul lacerated under a sense of afflictions he could not account for—visitations from the Almighty that were most painfully mysterious.

4. For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.

The translation—"For thou hast said," fails to give correctly the relations of thought since the verb "moekest" in the previous verse, and "said" in this verse, stand in Hebrew in the same form of the verb. Hence better thus: That thou mayest mock and also that thou mayest say, etc., my doctrine is all right; my views of God's administration are just. I have been morally pure before thee, etc.—As to this point, Zophar failed to distinguish between being sincere as opposed to hypocritical—which Job did claim to be; and being absolutely sinless before God—which Job did not claim. But men in controversy are wont to fail in just discrimination, as also in candor and kindness toward an opponent.

5. But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee:

6. And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that *they are* double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee *less* than thine iniquity *deserveth*.

The second clause of v. 6 as put in our version is by no means lucid. It is parallel with the preceding, thus: That God would show thee the secret things of wisdom, how there are complications to understand—*i. e.*, how there are doublings, intricate enfoldings, in the ways of God, considered as subjects of human thought and inquiry.—O that God himself would speak and show thee the deep things of his kingdom, and so put to silence thy complaints against his ways!—a sensible prayer surely, even on the mildest

theory of Job's actual case! For man's darkened mind gets the true light of God only when God himself comes near to speak to man's inner soul.—Last clause of v. 6 is thus: Then wouldest thou know that God forgetteth for thee some of thy sins (Heb.), the sense of which is—does not bring them all into remembrance against thee.

Zophar thinks of Job's insinuation that God has over-marked his sins—has been severely exact—not to say, more than exact, in noting his iniquities. If the Lord were to meet Job in solemn review of his case, frail man would see that God had by no means brought all his sins—much less, *more* than all, up to remembrance.

7. Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

8. *It is* as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?

9. The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.

Whatever we may think of the bearing of these conceptions of God upon Zophar's argument with Job, they are at once profoundly true, and grandly, yea sublimely, expressed.—The Hebrew puts it—Canst thou find out the deep things of God? Canst thou find out the Almighty One, to the very end—till there shall be no more to find? "Heights of heaven are they"—*i. e.*, the things that are in him which ye have to search out; deeper than the under-world; longer than this wide earth is its measure, and broader than the sea! By what standard shall we conceive his vastness; what can we find in all the realm of nature that can give us an adequate conception or illustration of the great depths of his being or of the infinitude of his perfections?

As bearing upon the points at issue in this discussion, nothing could be more appropriate. God's ways are deep; thy short line can not reach their bottom. His ends in the pains he inflicts or suffers to befall us, may lie remote, far beyond our vision; his wisdom in these plans and his love in the ends he seeks may be equally too deep and too vast for us to take in, and consequently too great to be adjudged before our petty tribunal. It were wise therefore for us to desist at the outset and never presume to sit in judgment upon the ways of the Almighty. We may think it humiliating—we can never reasonably think it unwise—to accept these great facts of our present existence as related to God's ways in providence. The occasions are countless in which we must despair of fathoming the depths of God's thought, and must fall back upon his promises and upon his known wisdom and love, resting there till the possible, yea probable, revelations of the great future shall make all plain that we shall then need to know.—Meantime, let our faith in God become only the more strong for the dark, inscrutable things which constitute so much of the moral trial of our present life. Who knows how much

this discipline of faith may have to do with the peace and blessedness of our heaven at last?

Zophar's doctrine—God's ways too deep for man to fathom—had good lessons for Job; scarcely less good for Zophar—a fact which he may have overlooked. For Zophar assumed to pronounce very definitely and positively in regard to God's moral administration in this world; and what is more, he made bad mistakes. If he had held his judgment in suspense till he should know God better, he would have been a wiser man.

10. If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?

11. For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider *it*?

12. For vain man would be wise, though man be born *like* a wild ass's colt.

In v. 10 the leading words are borrowed from judicial proceedings; thus. If he (God) comes upon thee (*i. e.*, for arrest), and imprisons thee, and convokes or summons a court to try the case, then who can answer—*i. e.*, to his indictment?—"For he knoweth men of wickedness—(ah, so perfectly!)"—"*he*" being made emphatic; *he* surely of all beings will certainly know. He sees iniquity, though he seems not to notice it. So we must construe the last verb in v. 11.—When he appears not to know—a form of the Hebrew verb, often used specially for what *appears* or *seems* to be. So God certainly notices all human guilt, however he may seem not to know it.—But man, hollow at heart, is without understanding—a passage in which the Hebrew words are quite peculiar and indeed specially forcible;—suggesting this: Man with heart *bored* through and through, hollow and empty, is *heartless* in the sense of being without understanding.—As a foal of the wild ass is man born; and consequently so is he from his birth—a view of depraved man, at once most sad and yet most true!

13. If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him:

14. If iniquity *be* in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.

15. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear:

16. Because thou shalt forget *thy* misery, *and* remember *it* as waters *that* pass away:

17. And *thine* age shall be clearer than the noon-day; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.

But bad as man is, there is yet hope for the penitent. Therefore let me say to thee, that if even thou wilt prepare thy heart, diligently giving thyself to reflection and repentance; and then spread forth thy hands in prayer; and if there be iniquity in thy

hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness abide in thy tents—the plural perhaps including those of his children as well as his own; then *surely* (better than “for” as the first word of v. 15) thou shouldest lift up thy face without spot—with no waste of disease and no stain from tears of sorrow;—and be steadfast in the sense of a sweet confidence in God;—for thou shalt forget these bitter sorrows and remember them only as men remember water-floods when they have gone to return no more.—Brighter than noon shall a new life arise; the (former) darkness shall be as the morning. So this may be read, if the Heb. word here rendered “darkness” be a noun; if a verb (according to some authorities) then thus: Though now thou art dark, yet shalt thou be as the morning. The sense in either reading is the same.—All this describes the new life of peace and joy which should ensue upon his repentance and God’s forgiveness.

18. And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope: yea, thou shalt dig *about thee*, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety.

19. Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make *thee* afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee.

20. But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope *shall be as* the giving up of the ghost.

This might well be read—And then thou wilt be trustful, for there will be good ground for it (ground for all hope); yea, thou wilt search (to see if all is well) and lie down without fear. Thou shalt have sweet undisturbed repose; and the high consideration accorded to thee in thy former prosperity shall return again;—“many shall seek thy favor.”—But the eyes of the wicked shall waste away, consumed with grief, sorely pained with perpetual disappointment in all expected pleasure; refuge perishes from them, and their hope—it is the breathing out of one’s life; it passes forever away like the spirit departing in death.

Zophar, like his brethren, held on persistently to one and the same theory, viz., that all the sufferings of this life are judgments sent from God, and are the indices and measure of the sufferer’s guilt; that Job—good man though he had seemed to be—must not think himself an exception to these invariable laws of God’s present government, and therefore he must have been a great and grievous sinner and ought to admit the fact—ought to open his soul to the conscious sense of guilt, and seek mercy by repentance and prayer for pardon. On these conditions they think it safe to promise him forgiveness, and then a new and joyous life.

CHAPTER XII.

Reply of Job.

1. And Job answered and said,
2. No doubt but ye *are* the people, and wisdom shall die with you.
3. But I have understanding as well as you; I *am* not inferior to you; yea, who knoweth not such things as these?

According to a usage with disputants, more common than praiseworthy, Job opens his reply with a caustic retort. In apology for him we might say—It was provoked by the claim to superior wisdom which his friends had set up and which was thrust forward in a very offensive way by Zophar in the beginning of his last speech. Yes, in keen sarcasm, Job replies, “no doubt ye are the people” and ye represent the sum total of all human knowledge and sagacity: when ye come to die, all wisdom must perish from among men! Alas for all future generations!—But, indulge me to say—“I have some understanding as truly as yourselves”—in which phrase Job’s choice of terms has an eye to Zophar’s words (11: 12); man bored out till his heart is hollow, is of necessity *heartless*—using heart in the sense of understanding. This, Zophar had insinuated, was the case with Job; and to this, therefore, Job indignantly replies;—That is no more true of me than of yourself. In v. 2, the second clause is literally—“I am in no respect more fallen than you” which may perhaps intimate that the original fall of man from primeval purity reached his opponent as truly as himself.—The last clause is—“With whom are not all such things”—knowledges—as ye have been proudly displaying and claiming as your exclusive possession? They are no specialty of yours. Any body could say all that.

4. I am *as* one mocked of his neighbor, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright *man* is laughed to scorn.

The sense of this verse turns much upon the point—*who* is it—Job or his neighbor—that calls upon God and he answereth?—The order of the words in the English version suggests “neighbor”—this being the nearest antecedent; but the course of thought and argument clearly demands its reference to Job.—I am become one mocked of his neighbor, even I who call upon God and he answers;—for I have cried to God in my supplications and he has often deigned to hear my cry. Yet ye, my professed friends, are utterly pitiless to my appeals for your sympathy and moral support. Strange to say, a mockery—an object of insult—is the just, upright man!—a fact which of itself overturns your whole theory of the moral administration of this world.—We

must suppose that Job makes this a point in his rebutting of the main argument of his friends. They maintained that every-where and always the good were held in honor, and only the bad were abased. Job answers: I have become a by-word and a mockery to my neighbors, and I have a deep, immovable consciousness of general integrity and uprightness among men. This consciousness of my inner soul refutes all your philosophy.

5. He that is ready to slip with *his feet is as* a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.

The first Hebrew word in this verse* admits of being taken in two very different senses. If made up of a preposition and a noun, it means—for *misfortune* (or *calamity*); but taken as only one word, it signifies a *lamp*. Our translators took it in the latter sense: most of the modern critics (with good reason, I think,) prefer the former. So taken, the verse may be read—"There is scorn for misfortune in the thought of him at ease—scorn ready for men of wavering step." When a man becomes the victim of misfortune and his feet slip, portending a terrible fall, then those who live at ease, all going well with them, heap upon him their scorn.† Such facts do occur in human life (Job would say), and he doubtless meant to intimate—such is precisely the case between me and my professed friends. The facts reflect no special honor upon poor human nature. I submit to you, my friends, whether ye ought not to be ashamed of it!

6. The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hands God bringeth *abundantly*.

The last clause of this verse has been construed variously by critics; but this variety affects the general argument too little to justify an elaborate discussion. I accept the general sense of our English version—"into whose hand God causes good to come"—*i. e.*, who prospers them in their efforts to accumulate.—The verse entire affirms a fact of most vital bearing upon the great argument between Job and his friends. The tents of highway robbers continue in peace, undisturbed; all their plunder remains secure for their enjoyment, how much soever they provoke God to his face, violating his law recklessly, as their life-long business and avowed profession.

Yet, strange to say, God, the righteous and just One, brings them earthly treasures—the best man has—with his full hand.—In that great Arabian country, Job knew, and his friends

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† The English version—"As a lamp despised"—is barren of pertinence and good sense, and ought of course to be rejected if any better construction is possible. A "lamp" is not a thing to be despised anyhow, and no reason appears why "one at ease" should despise it. The construction adopted in these notes is perfectly in harmony with the verse previous and with the entire context.

also knew, that freebooting was the known profession and pursuit of multitudes of men; and they all alike knew that such men were more often successful, secure, unmolested, than otherwise. —How shall such a fact be accounted for? How (Job would say) do ye reconcile it with your doctrine of a perfect retribution in this world? A fact so patent to every mind; a case of such outrageous wickedness, of such wide extent, so universally known and so very rarely brought to condign punishment in this world, was itself alone sufficient to upset the theory of Job's friends. So long as this great fact stood before their eyes, how could sensible men hold on to their theory that all wickedness is punished in this world, swiftly and surely, because God is certainly just and almighty?

7. But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:

8. Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

9. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?

10. In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

The only possible way to break the force of Job's argument from these prosperous freebooters would be to say that their case does not come under God's administration; that such crimes lay outside the pale of his government. —To this supposed objection therefore, Job now addresses himself. —Do you say that God has nothing to do with highway robbers? Go, ask the beasts and the birds of heaven; or speak to the earth and to the fishes of the sea. They surely will tell thee. Who does not learn from them that God's hand is every-where, active evermore in all events, holding in its control the breath of every living thing, and not least the spirits of all of human kind? Does not God uphold the life and supply the breath of those "robbers" whose tents are in peace and security and into whose hand God is perpetually pouring the good things that other and better men have honestly toiled to produce?

11. Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat?

12. With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.

13. With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.

Doth not the ear try words, even as the mouth tasteth its own food? —not two questions, but one—the second clause being a case to illustrate the point of the first. —Upon Job's argument the point made here bears in this way: Have not all men a certain good sense which they may rightly use upon such questions

as we have now in hand—a sense as truly *of nature* as their relish for bread? And if ye were to use this native good sense, would ye not discern at once that your theory of God's rule over human affairs is utterly at variance with facts well and universally known?

You say—"With the ancients is wisdom", and you appeal to the testimony of all the old patriarchs.—To which I reply—Not so much with your ancient men, but with *Him*, the Everlasting One, is real wisdom and all strength; he alone hath counsel and understanding in their consummate perfection. His works lie spread out before us; *I appeal to them*. God is both older and wiser than your ancient patriarchs; the length of his days gives him an understanding infinitely higher, better, surer, than what ye have adduced from your old fathers.

14. Behold, he breaketh down, and it can not be built again; he shuteth up a man, and there can be no opening.

15. Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.

Here the argument appeals mainly to God's great works in the material world. Is not his power in this realm supreme? Does not his providence reach all events? Therefore (this is the underlying inference) therefore all these events come into his plan of governing the world morally, so that if we see the powerful robbers of the Great Desert (v. 6) outrageously wicked, and yet almost universally successful and unpunished through all this earthly life, we can by no means evade the testimony from their case by assuming that God's government over men leaves them out.

16. With him *is* strength and wisdom; the deceived and the deceiver *are* his.

17. He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools.

18. He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle.

19. He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.

20. He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged.

21. He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.

Here Job appeals mainly to God's agencies upon the *world of mind*—the control he wields over various classes of men here specified. Doubtless Job purposes to make his argument rise from the special to the universal, on this wise: The destinies of all these men God shapes and controls; and if of these, then no less, of others—no less, of all.—"The deceived and the

deceiver are his" (v. 16)—not in the sense of his willing, obedient servants; this is by no means the thing he means and asserts; but they are so entirely in his hand that he shapes their destiny. If they have any retribution on earth, it comes from his hand. If they escape this retribution here, the fact proves that the retributions of time are incomplete, and leave some, perhaps many, things to be set right in the great hereafter.—So he baffles human wisdom (v. 17); breaks the power of kings, or gives them resistless power as he may choose (v. 18); for in oriental imagery, "girding up the loins" was significant of activity and power; and "loosening the girdle" had the opposite sense.—In v. 19, the word "princes" means primarily *priests*, who in those early ages were clothed with no small measure of authority in civil affairs.—In v. 20 we may read—From men long trusted, he takes away the *lip*—the power of influence by speech. So also the wisdom of the aged he withdraws, perhaps referring to the waning of their powers in extreme old age.—The noblest of men are as nothing before him when he sees fit to bring them low.

22. He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.

23. He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them *again*.

24. He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness *where there is no way*.

25. They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.

The same strain of remark and the same course of argument continues through the chapter.—"Discover"—a word which in modern usage signifies commonly, *to find by search*, in the age of our English Bible meant to *reveal to the view of others*, *i. e.*, to take off the covering:—which is the sense here. Deep things, God brings up out of the darkness; things dark as the shadow of death, he brings forth to the light.—So if nations rise into great power or decline into weakness and ruin, it is his hand that works both results, at his perfect will (v. 23). The wisdom ("heart") of the wisest counsellor, he takes away at his pleasure, and puts them upon wandering in untrodden ways. They grope as if there were no light for them, and reel as men under intoxication. Thus God's agencies over men are at once supreme, absolute and universal.

CHAPTER XIII.

Job's speech continued.

1. Lo, mine eye hath seen all *this*, mine ear hath heard and understood it.

2. What ye know, *the same* do I know also: I *am* not inferior unto you.

Such have been the results of my personal observations. I know these things because I have seen them. Fully aware that ye have said much the same things as to God's control over all human affairs, I wish you to understand that I am fully informed as to these things no less than yourselves.

3. Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.

But from all your reasonings and allegations against me, I make my final appeal to the Almighty.—Job makes the word "I" strongly emphatic:—I for my part—I with all my heart, make this appeal to God. Oh how do I long for a hearing before Him!

4. But ye *are* forgers of lies, ye *are* all physicians of no value.

5. Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom.

6. Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips.

"But *ye*"—this word also is made emphatic—"ye are only forgers of lies, working up false charges against me continually."—"Physicians" does not well translate Job's word here. *Botchers, patchers*, is the sense. Ye are makers of vanities, *i. e.*, lies; and botch the work at that—the figure being drawn from putting ugly looking patches upon worn garments. How much wiser and more to your credit, to hold your peace! But at least give ear for a little to my reasonings and to the pleadings of my lips.

7. Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?

8. Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God?

9. Is it good that he should search you out? or as one man mocketh another, do ye *so* mock him?

10. He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons.

Would ye speak falsely in God's behalf! Does He ask you to vindicate him with falsehood and deceit? Can he possibly accept

such vindication?—To “accept one’s person” is a phrase of well defined meaning in the Scriptures—it being always used in the bad sense of sinister partiality, regarding something external, the outside appearance, rather than intrinsic merit. Job intimates that his friends were pleading for God on false grounds, assuming falsely, through their own mistake, that God was acting on certain principles when he was not. Could this be pleasing to God? How would it fare with you if God were to search you out and say to you—I ask no such defense from you! Cease your attempt to justify me on false grounds, or to vindicate me as if I were doing what I am not! God will surely rebuke you if ye accept persons, and none the less because it is attempted upon himself.

11. Shall not his excellency make you afraid? and his dread fall upon you?

Considering the sublime majesty of God—his ineffable glory—does it not become you to dread his displeasure? Even though ye may have intended to do him honor, yet to misapprehend the principles on which he governs this world and make apologies and vindications for him which rest on false assumptions, must be a very serious matter! Let the fear of it make you cautious!

12. Your remembrances *are* like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay.

The word “remembrances” will probably mislead the English reader, for the original here by no means signifies your recollections, or the things you remember; but instead of this—your *most memorable things*, your *wisest sayings*. They are only as ashes; flavorless, caustic, all unfit for any use in the human mouth or stomach.—The translation—“Your bodies”—is no less inept and misleading. “Bulwarks” or “towers,” is the sense—the term applying to their main arguments which they assumed to be impregnable rock; but Job declares to be only towers of clay, such as the rains of heaven would soon wash away.

13. Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what *will*.

14. Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand?

This v. 13 serves to show how deeply Job felt the insinuations and assumptions of his three friends. He begs that they would be silent and let him speak in his own vindication, whatever may come upon him as the consequence. Let me defend my reputation against your false and cruel aspersions, though it cost me every thing dear, even to life itself!—In v. 14, the phrase—“Take my flesh in my teeth” is in itself very obscure, it being doubtful what the precise figure in mind may be. But the second clause “Put my life in my hand,” has a well established usage, and therefore, under the law of Hebrew parallelism, serves to deter-

mine the general meaning of the first clause. This second proverbial phrase is used by Jephthah of himself (Judg. 12: 3); of David by Jonathan (1 Sam. 19: 5); by the woman of Endor of herself (1 Sam. 28: 21); and by the writer of Ps. 119: 109 of himself. Job's meaning, therefore, must be—Wherefore do I put my life in jeopardy before God by such a bold request, not to say, demand, for a hearing upon my own case? Nothing less than a deep consciousness of general integrity and an irrepressible longing to be vindicated from such aspersions as yours could induce me to risk such a peril.

15. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

16. He also *shall be* my salvation; for a hypocrite shall not come before him.

Our English version—"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him"—yields a precious sentiment, expressing a spirit of trust which, though desperate, is yet admirable and blessed. But the honest interpreter of the original words is compelled to dissent from the correctness of this translation. The first Heb. word is certainly not "Though", but *Behold*. The next word is the simple future—"He will slay me." The word next in order, according to the Hebrew text, (*i. e.*, the consonants) must be the negative particle—*not*; *I may not hope*. I can have no hope, *i. e.*, of my life before him. Then he proceeds to say—Yet I will defend my ways before him—in his presence.—The next verse presents Job renewing his confidence in God: "Also he shall be my salvation, because the bold notorious sinner shall not come before him:"—but he tacitly implies—I am not such; I am substantially honest and true to God, and such as I am may come into his presence.—The word rendered "hypocrite" can not be restricted to that form of sin, but is used of one whose sinful character is known and read of all.—"He will slay me" may be taken to express the feeling that Job had, at least in his most depressed moods—a feeling that he could not long survive his dreadful sufferings and should probably soon die under them. But even should this be the case, he longed for the opportunity to vindicate himself against the aspersions cast on him so cruelly by his friends. So deep was his consciousness of general integrity toward God, as opposed to the arrant hypocrisy imputed to him by his friends that he does not fear at all to come before God on this issue. Indeed, the very thought of such a hearing before God inspires an assurance that God will yet deliver his name from this reproach and cause him to lift up his head as one vindicated before his generation.

17. Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears.

18. Behold now, I have ordered *my* cause; I know that I shall be justified.

Hear me; I have prepared my defense: "I know that I am innocent"—or rather, *just*—this being more precisely the sense of the Hebrew verb. It is not so much an assurance that the proposed hearing and trial will result in acquittal, as a consciousness of being innocent of the charge of hypocrisy, brought against him by his friends.

19. Who *is* he *that* will plead with me? for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.

Who can contend with me, *i. e.*, successfully, on this point? For if any one can, with success, I will hold my peace and die! It were of no use for me to live!—The Heb. words by no means sustain the English version—"If I hold my tongue, I shall die." There is no "*if*" in the Hebrew. Two future tenses of apparently like future significance, are all we have, I will (or would) be silent, and I will die! The sense, therefore, must be as above given: If any one can contend effectually against me so that my attempted vindication must prove a failure, I might as well be silent and die!

20. Only do not two *things* unto me; then will I not hide myself from thee.

21. Withdraw thine hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid.

22. Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me.

Now, thinking of God as the Judge before whom he is to plead his cause, he begs to stipulate two conditions; viz., (a) That God would lift from him that heavy hand and relieve his insupportable pains; (b) That he would withdraw his terrors and not overwhelm his soul with dread. Then the Lord might call, speaking first, and Job would answer; or, in the reverse order—"Let me speak, and answer thou me."

23. How many *are* mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.

24. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?

25. Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?

"How many and what are my sins?" for Job manifestly assumes that he has sinned and can by no means make out his own sinless innocence. He seems honestly desirous to know what they are and why God has been afflicting him so fearfully. It was agonizing that God should seem to hide his face and treat him as an enemy. Why should this be?—In v. 25 Job expresses his sense of his own littleness and frailty, and makes this a plea with God to spare him. The word Job used means, not—"break a driven leaf," but *terrify*, put in awful fear.

26. For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.

27. Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.

28. And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, as a garment that is moth-eaten.

"Writest bitter things"—for so these terrible inflictions upon me must imply. I am made to inherit the sins of my youth—the bitter consequences of early sins following me thus, far down into these years of my advanced age. So it seemed to him—perhaps because he could account for these inflictions of disease and pain on no other principle. This law of inheritance is (alas for thousands) but too sure and too terrible!—In v. 27, the words—"Settest a print upon the heels of my feet"—fail to give the most approved sense of the Hebrew. The lexical authorities differ slightly from each other; one putting it—To dig a trench or draw a line round the soles of my feet: another, to put thyself as a limit round, etc. All concur in the sense—shutting in; circumscribing within limits beyond which he could not pass. Job was *shut up*, and could move nowhere to escape from his woes.—In v. 28, all critics concur that the words refer to Job, speaking of himself;—I perish, like a thing thoroughly rotten, as a garment moth-eaten through and through. There is no stamina left in me for longer endurance.



CHAPTER XIV.

Job's speech concluded.

1. Man *that* is born of a woman *is* of few days, and full of trouble.

2. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

3. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such a one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?

4. Who can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean? not one.

"Man"—the Heb. word chosen here suggesting the *ground* out of which he was formed—has at best but few days on earth, and those, full of turmoil, unrest. He comes into being, fresh and blooming as the flower; but like this same flower, he is soon cut off. He flees as *the* (not *a*) shadow—*i. e.*, as the swiftly lengthening shadow toward evening; and tarries not. Like that shadow, he too is soon gone.—Upon such an one (for such am I)—upon

one so frail, so short-lived, dost thou open thine eyes to fasten them upon me and bring me into judgment with thee? This is a plea for consideration, not to say, commiseration, in view of his frailty.—He proceeds to add another point to his plea—this being taken from the fact of an impure ancestry—a parentage which in some undefined way involved sin. “Who can produce a clean thing from an unclean? Not one can do this.”—The Hebrew for the verb—“can produce,” or “can bring,” is literally, *Who will give?* but of some twenty or more cases of its use in our Hebrew scriptures, it has almost if not quite invariably the optative sense—*O that one could bring*, etc! In this passage, the optative wish is not congruous with the answer—“Not one,” since this manifestly calls for the question—Who can? In what way moral uncleanness inheres in the human mother and attaches to her offspring, Job does not indicate. He leaves us to adopt some theory which will neither implicate the divine justice on the one hand, nor on the other, abrogate human individual responsibility for every thing that is actual sin. All theories on this point ought manifestly to be constructed within and under these limitations.

5. Seeing his days *are* determined, the number of his months *are* with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he can not pass;

6. Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as a hireling, his day.

Strictly taken, these Hebrew words mean—If his days are fixed, *if* the number of his months is with thee—ordained by thy will, etc.; then (v. 6) turn thine eye away from him, etc. But this “*if*” does not suggest any doubt of the fact, and is therefore equivalent to—*Inasmuch* as this is so.—That he “may accomplish his day” should rather be—that he may enjoy, take delight in his day—a plea based on the extreme shortness of human life, that God would be lenient to frail, short-lived man and indulge him to enjoy his brief life-time as best he may. As the hireling has just his one day to make out, so has man on earth only his brief life-day.

7. For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

8. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground;

9. Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.

10. But man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

Man lives one life-time on earth—no more. When he is cut down, he never shoots up again from the stump or stock. There is such hope for the tree. Though cut down, and though the

root be ever much decayed in the ground, the scent of water at its roots may start it into fresh life; but never is it so with man. He dies—and where is he? We see him no more.

The careful reader of this chapter will be reminded continually of *Psalm 90*:—written by Moses—shall we say, by the *same Moses*? The tone of each is almost identical; the figures and images are to a remarkable degree the same. In the Psalm—"Thou turnest man to destruction": In this poem—"Man dieth and wasteth away; man giveth up the ghost, and where is he"? The Psalmist says—"Thou carryest them away as with a flood"; Job has it—"The waters wear the stones; its flood sweeps away the dust of the earth; so thou destroyest the hope of man."—More definitely still:—the Psalm has it—"In the morning they are like grass which groweth up; in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up: in the evening it is cut down and withereth." In Job we read—"He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down". "There is hope for a tree that though cut down, it may live again; but man dieth and wasteth away";—"lieth down and riseth up no more." And finally these passages alike ascribe human mortality and frailty to the wrath of God against man for his sin.—More decisive indications, in two distinct compositions, of the same originating mind, the same imagination, the same mode of viewing a given subject—a similarity so entire as to indicate if not even actually prove identity of authorship—it would not be easy to find.

11. As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up;

12. So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

The "sea" thought of here, is not "the great and wide sea" whose waters never fail; but inland ponds or pools which, in tropical and desert regions, are subject to disappear in drought. With these man may be compared; his life-waters dry away and disappear; he lieth down to rise no more to resume his earthly life—never till the heavens pass away.—We need not press this to the extent of denying a final resurrection at the last day. The writer manifestly thinks only of a resumption of this earthly life, analogous to that of a tree cut off near the ground, which may shoot up again. Such resumption of earthly life is to man, in all his generations, for ever hopeless.

13. Oh that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!

14. If a man die, shall he live *again*? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

15. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

Again Job's mind falls back upon himself—his desolate, hopeless present; his pains that will not let up; his fast waning life-powers, and his utter hopelessness of any thing better for this fleeting life. Therefore he looks forward for his only hope to the state beyond. "Oh that thou wouldst hide me in the under-world (Sheol)—not the *grave* which receives the body; it was not for his perishing body that he sought a hiding-place from the wrath of God; but rather for that portion of his being that could not die!—And then I pray also that thou wouldst set the time for my release from that dark under-world, that "land of darkness and the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness", as himself has described it (10: 21, 22). Appoint me a time and remember me for good.—Thus Job raises and meets that one most momentous of all human questions:—"If a man die, shall he live again"?—which here must be taken in its broadest and most far-reaching application;—Shall he live again *ever*—again, on beyond his life-period in that dark under-world? For in its application to the present world, he had settled the question most decisively already, and it were simple fatuity to ask it again. The tree, cut down, may spring up again from its roots, even though much decayed; but man giveth up the ghost, to live here again never, no *never*!—But the question in its broader and far more remote application yet remains. Is there still another life-period *beyond* man's hiding-place in Sheol—*after* his abode, be it more or less protracted, in that under-world? Upon this his mind now fastens itself, and with this in view, he prays—"Oh that thou wouldst appoint me a set time—fix the period of its duration—and remember me"!—But is it really so, that man, once departed from this life and hidden in the dark under-world, shall live again—passing into another and more glorious life? Assuming this to be the case, he says—Then will I wait on patiently, all the days of my *warfare* (the usual and proper sense of his word)—all the period of my enlistment and hard service as it were under arms—until my great change comes—my glad release and discharge. This must refer to that momentous change which will raise him out from the under-world (Sheol) into some better life beyond. Up into that more glorious life, Thou wilt call me; and oh how gladly shall I answer thee! I know thou wilt yearn with longing desire for man, the work of thine own hands. Surely the Great and Loving Father can not, will not forget the creatures of his hand, the dear objects of his care. The verb which Job used here expresses the deepest longings of one's heart.

16. For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?

17. My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.

The relation of thought which connects these verses and all that remain in this chapter, with vs. 13-15 above, requires and will reward the closest attention.—In the verses last preceding, we have seen gleams of light breaking forth from the far distant future upon this great sufferer's afflicted heart. But plainly, he does not pause to enjoy them long. Is it due (perhaps it is) to the terrible severity of his pains that he can keep his thought away from his sad present only for a moment, and then it will return, as here? Perhaps he thinks of justifying that outburst of strong emotion in the prayer (v. 13); "Oh that God would hide me in the under-world till his wrath be past!" For consider, how full of trial and solicitude is this present state of mine! For now Thou art numbering my steps, subjecting every movement to the most rigid scrutiny, watching as it were with eagle eye for my sin; then sealing up in a bag all my iniquities for some future re-examination and perhaps for a yet more terrible retribution. So we must understand these words and must assume that they put Job's case *as it seemed to him* under the pressure of unrelieved suffering and of that state of perplexity, amounting almost to distraction, under which he could see no reason why *he* was singled out for such unexampled suffering.

In the phrase—"sewest up mine iniquity," some critics give the verb the secondary sense (which appears in 13: 4)—Thou *patchest* up false charges—devising, working up charges beyond what the truth will warrant. Against this sense of the verb in this passage, it should suffice to say: (a) That it is too revolting in its bearing upon God to be ascribed to Job, unless the usage of the verb absolutely demands it—which it does not: and (b) That the law of parallelism justifies, not to say requires, the other sense, given above—Thou *sewest* up as well as *sealest* up—for safe preservation.—The salient point of thought here is *the enduring nature of sin*; that sins *committed against God* can never drop into oblivion. No lapse of time sweeps them away; no forgetfulness abates their vivid impression upon the Infinite Mind. They live on, they are sealed up and pass on down the ages to their final retribution!—This seems to be the point of thought from which is suggested to the mind of Job the contrast which appears in the next verse; viz., between never forgotten sins on the one hand; and the mortal part of man—his earthly hopes and his earthly thoughts and activities on the other.

18. And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place.

19. The waters wear the stones; thou wastest away the things which grow *out* of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man.

20. Thou prevailest forever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.

21. His sons come to honor, and he knoweth *it* not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth *it* not of them.

22. But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.

The first Heb. word of this passage should not be read "surely," for it means *But*, in the strongly adversative sense which indicates a contrast as suggested above. *But*, while sins, the transgressions of men, have in them no element of decay; while they never cease to be; while they live on and on—treasured up by the great moral Ruler of the universe—every thing that is only material, of perishable matter, passes soon away. The mountain crest, loosened by frost, or broken off by the lightnings of heaven, falls from its lofty height and comes to nought (*i. e.*, is a mountain no more). Even rocks are upturned from their place by the earthquake. Water wears away even the stones; its floods (Heb. something *poured* out) sweep away the dust of the earth, washing down the hills and bearing away the debris: so Thou destroyest the hope of man. Thou dost overpower him continually (v. 20) and he goeth hence. "Thou changest his countenance" from the joyous freshness of health, to the paleness of disease and the ghastliness of death, and then sendest him away! His sons survive him for a little season, perhaps they rise to honor, but he knows it not, or if they are brought low, he is equally unconscious of their state. His body mouldering in the grave and his soul in that dark under-world—how can he know and why should he care what may befall his sons who survive him? Job certainly assumes that the dead have no knowledge of even their nearest and dearest surviving friends.—We must commence v. 22, with the word "only," for this is the sense of the Hebrew word—indicating that this and this only is all we can say of the departed one. He lives within himself; he is shut up to his own thought—to his own pain if pain be his lot, or to his own joy if his lot be one of joy. So I think we must understand this last verse of Job's speech. Conant's translation represents the Hebrew better than our received version does:—"Only his flesh for itself shall have pain, and his soul for itself shall mourn." This seems to be put in antithesis with a state of sympathy with the ease of his living sons. Such sympathy Job denies. The departed father has no knowledge of his living sons: he lives wholly and only within his own realm of inner consciousness, cognizant of his own sufferings or joys, and of none save his own. This seems to be the sense of his words, and should therefore be taken as the doctrine held by himself and probably by the men of his times. How much light from revelation on these points had dawned upon the leading minds of that age, it seems quite impossible to determine. It is very clear that no certain knowledge on this subject can be reached by the wise men of any age, be it never so ancient or so modern, save as such knowledge comes to them from God. He and he only has this knowledge; he and he only can impart it.

CHAPTER XV.

Second speech of Eliphaz.

1. Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,
2. Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?
3. Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?

In the established order of speaking, it falls now to Eliphaz to speak the second time. Following the usual but by no means commendable practice of warm disputants, he opens with cutting sarcasm:—Does it befit a wise man, such as you profess to be, to respond with knowledge that is only windy (literally, “knowledge of wind”)—good for sound, but void of sense; put forth with long and abundant talk, but without pertinence, solid argument or real wisdom? Shall a wise man fill his belly with the east wind—not only vain in the sense of being empty of thought, but violent and destructive? Should a man of wisdom fill his belly with tornadoes, to blow off in tempests of desolating words? reproving with speech that avails nothing and words in which is no profit? From the point where Eliphaz stood—to a mind full of notions like his as to God’s administration of events in the present, all Job’s words would doubtless seem windy and worthless. Even that sad spectacle of suffering fell on his soul, not stirring one impulse of sympathy, but only proving to him according to his doctrine that Job was the wickedest of men. Hence in his view all Job’s words were wide of the truth and served only as a substitute for repentance—squarely in the way of his only salvation. So he felt it to be his duty to rebuke his friend in the plainest terms—as we shall see.

4. Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.

• 5. For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity, and thou choosest the tongue of the crafty.

6. Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee.

“Fear,” in the sense common in the Old Testament, is *piety*; while the verb “cast off” looks not merely to an effect *upon himself*, but upon others as well;—Thou dost *annul, abolish* all piety. The things thou sayest against God tend to displace the very foundations of piety and make men think that God is not worthy of their love and confidence.—“Restrainest prayer”—the word for prayer however, more naturally means meditation, but meditation before God or toward God means reverent and solemn thoughts of God—such as lie at the foundation of real piety.—

In making these grave charges against thee, I am not talking at random, I speak on the authority of thine own words. Thine own mouth is the witness; thy mouth condemns thee and not I. The things thou hast said have charged God foolishly. Thou hast reflected severely upon his justice; thou hast dishonored his name.—In v. 5, the Heb. word corresponding to “uttereth,” is of rare occurrence in this sense and quite peculiar, indicating, not that Job taught iniquity intentionally, but rather incidentally; that his words were *suggestive* of iniquity, were closely connected—tied up with it; were redolent of sin; and could not fail therefore to be mischievous.

7. *Art thou the first man that was born?* or wast thou made before the hills?

8. Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?

9. What knowest thou, that we know not? *what* understandest thou, which is not in us?

10. With us *are* both the grayheaded and the very aged men, much elder than thy father.

Eliphaz had great faith in *authority*—the testimony of the oldest men. Hence this argument;—art thou the first man born—brought into being before the hills? Wert thou a listener in God’s privy council when the great principles of his government over races yet unborn were discussed and determined? And dost thou restrict all wisdom to thyself, assuming that other men have none and have no business to claim any? By what right dost thou claim to know more than we? What knowledge hast thou that we have not? On our side are men much older than thy father.—“On our side” of this argument, he probably meant, including men not present; for it is scarcely supposable that either of the three disputants had reached the great age of which he speaks.—His remark suggests however that, at this time, Job had not reached a very great age.

11. *Are the consolations of God small with thee?* is there any secret thing with thee?

12. Why doth thine heart carry thee away? and what do thy eyes wink at,

13. That thou turnest thy spirit against God, and lettest *such* words go out of thy mouth?

“Are the consolations of God too small for thee?”—(so the Hebrew); are they altogether unsatisfactory? Eliphaz manifestly thinks of the consolations which himself and his associates had brought to Job, and speaks of them (with perhaps some little self-conceit) as being from God himself.—In the last clause of v. 11, the received version quite fails of the real sense, for this clause should merely expand the thought of the former; thus—The consolations of God—the word that was very gentle toward thee:—

the sentiment being that their rebukes of Job, administered as God's consolations, were very mild; far less severe than he deserved.—“Why doth thine heart”—“*heart*” as the seat of feeling, emotion—sweep thee away, *i. e.*, from reason and all propriety? And for what do thine eyes *twinkle*—indicating a sneer of contempt toward God, as the next verse implies. What could have emboldened thee into such disrespect and irreverence toward God? Why hast thou suffered thine heart to feel such irreverence, and thy mouth to give it utterance?

14. What is man, that he should be clean? and *he which* is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

15. Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

16. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?

Eliphaz reverts to those impressive words which came to him in visions of the night (4: 17-19), and substantially quotes them. Doubtless they seemed to him to bring the very rebuke which Job's irreverent words as to God should receive. The entire passage as it stands here makes a strong contrast between man, born of woman, morally unclean, of a sinning race—on the one hand; and on the other, the holy and unsinching ones above. If in the latter, God puts no trust and accounts them, relatively to himself, not pure; how much more must he hold man to be abominable and polluted?—man who takes in sin so readily and even so greedily?

17. I will shew thee, hear me; and that *which* I have seen I will declare;

18. Which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not hid it:

19. Unto whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger passed among them.

Again Eliphaz brings forward his great argument from the authority of the fathers, to the point that the wicked have always been punished; sin has always met a present, swift retribution. All the wise and good of the earliest times have brought this down to us from the fathers, even from those who held the earth first and had it alone, and their primitive ideas, fresh from the Great Father of men, were as yet uncontaminated by the teaching of strangers coming among them. In his view the value of traditions from the fathers will be *as their age*, the most ancient being the best; and moreover *as their purity*—according as they were free from corruptions introduced by strangers.

20. The wicked man travaileth with pain all *his* days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor.

21. A dreadful sound *is* in his ears: in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.

22. He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword.

23. He wandereth abroad for bread, *saying*, Where is it? he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand.

24. Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid; they shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle.

In v. 20, last clause, our English version has it that the oppressor knows not how long he shall live. But this has little force, for the same is true of the best of men. The utmost that can be said pertinently on this point is that the continued life of the oppressor becomes specially uncertain; his chances of long life are seriously diminished.—A better construction puts “all his days” and “the number of years that are laid up for the oppressor” in apposition, each clause describing the future life of the great robber. Then the verse will affirm of him that *he—he* emphatically—is in torment all his days, even all the years, laid up for him. The statement is very strong—that *such a man is in perpetual torment* through all his wicked life. A dreadful sound rings evermore in his ear—a sound inspiring fear and dread. He hears it everywhere, day and night; he starts at every rustling leaf. In his most prosperous state, the destroyer may break in upon him with vengeance. He can have no confidence—(“believeth not”)—that he shall ever emerge out of this state of darkness and dread; the sword of some avenging hand is ever waiting for him. He is the man who roams abroad for even bread to eat, crying *Where?* conscious that the day of utter darkness is close upon him. The blow that he fears and dreads so much will surely fall ere long and overpower him—as a king would who was fully equipped for battle.—This strongly drawn picture leaves scarcely the least possible comfort or peace to the boldly wicked man.

25. For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.

26. He runneth upon him, *even on his neck*, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers:

27. Because he covereth his face with his fatness, and maketh collops of fat on *his* flanks.

28. And he dwelleth in desolate cities, *and in houses* which no man inhabiteth, which are ready to become heaps.

The reason for his unmitigated wretchedness is here traced to his daring impiety toward God.—The form of the verb translated, “strengtheneth himself,” does not imply that he really became strong against God—a thing entirely impossible for mortal man: but rather that he *made a show of himself as strong*; took on airs and proudly set himself forth as one able to measure arms with the Almighty. Such is the well known usage of this form of the Heb. verb.—In v. 26, we meet the question—Upon *whose* neck, and upon the thick bosses of *whose* bucklers? The

received version misleads most readers to suppose that the neck and the buckler also are those of God. Whereas, we must read—He (this proudly wicked man) runneth upon Him (God) with stiffened neck [high head], and with the thick bosses of his own buckler—*i. e.*, clad in defensive armor which he vainly assumes will shield him against the sword of the Almighty. It is not God, therefore, but the sinner who supposes himself to be thus armed. Vain mortal!—The description of his haughty pride and defiant hardihood continues: "Because he covered his face with his fatness," etc.—fatness and pride being in oriental conception, kindred and associated ideas. See Deut. 32: 15 and 31: 20 and Ps. 17: 10.—In v. 28 this savage freebooter—a man of violence and blood—is thought of as living amid the ruins of cities himself had laid desolate.

29. He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth.

30. He shall not depart out of darkness; the flame shall dry up his branches, and by the breath of his mouth shall he go away.

This wicked man makes a failure of his life, for the things he specially lives and labors for elude his grasp. He shall not enrich himself however much he may pillage and plunder, nor shall what he does seize upon be enduring.—The last clause of v. 29 has a rare word of very doubtful etymology and meaning.* Probably it means *possession*, of some sort. We may choose between extending abroad his possessions in the earth, and the bending down of his fruit (on trees) to the earth.—He shall not emerge (v. 30) out of darkness—*i. e.*, out of calamity. Fire shall scorch and wither his branches. By the breath of Jehovah's lips shall he be swept away—a figure which appears also in Isa. 11: 4.

31. Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity; for vanity shall be his recompense.

32. It shall be accomplished before his time, and his branch shall not be green.

33. He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive.

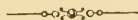
The sense is improved by reading the passage—Let him not trust in evil, he deceives himself (if he does); for evil shall be his recompense. The evil he trusts in will return upon him for his reward. And it will be fulfilled before its day—far sooner than one might naturally expect. Comparing him to the palm-tree, he will not remain green, His grapes drop off unripe; his olive-blossoms fall prematurely; no fruit ripens in his garden.

34. For the congregation of hypocrites *shall be* desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery.

35. They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.

The word "congregation" is too indefinite. Better *household*—his family and group of servants are made desolate, all cut off prematurely—said perhaps with an eye to the case of Job himself.—"Hypocrite" (as usual)—a great and bold sinner, yet not restricted to those who falsely pretend to be what they are not. Their plans of wickedness prove altogether abortive.

All these points in his description of the destiny of the wicked in this world Eliphaz lays down as universal; admitting of no exception. Obviously he first infers this from God's justice, strengthening this inference by his conviction that it *ought* to be so; and then backs up his doctrine by a very limited observation of facts in human history. Thus held and presented, his doctrine bore with terrible severity upon Job. Neither he nor his associates were disposed to soften this severity.



CHAPTER XVI.

Job replies.

1. Then Job answered and said,
2. I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all.
3. Shall vain words have an end? or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?

Taken in whole, this speech of Job (chap. 16 and 17) is a tender, pathetic appeal to his friends for their compassion and sympathy. His first words, as usual, are somewhat sharp; but, passing these, his strain of remark portrays his affliction and puts in strong light the deep trial of his soul because these afflictions come so manifestly from the hand of God, and because he can get no explanation of the reasons why the Lord afflicts him so fearfully.

I have heard many such "things"—*i. e.*, from you all. Your speeches have been mostly a repetition of the same things with scarcely the least variation or advance in the argument.—"Comforters of trouble" [Heb.]—who bring, not comfort but only deeper trouble—are ye all.—Do words of wind ever come naturally to an end? Is it not the normal law of such words to blow on and on, gusty, breezy, and nothing else? Observe, the question is not one of *expectation*;—May we not *hope* for an end of such words? Nor of *oughtness*;—*ought* they not to end some-

where? But, with a somewhat caustic turn, he intimates that words so empty, so void of sense, must naturally blow on with never an end, since they never accomplish any worthy purpose, and there will always remain the same reason for more as at the first.—In the second clause of v. 3, we should read—not, What “emboldens,” but what *stirs thee up*, excites, provokes, thee to answer *so*!

4. I also could speak as ye *do*: if your soul were in my soul’s stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you.

Job suggests that it would be very easy for him too to talk sagely, philosophically, and also very long, if only their respective cases were reversed—their soul in the condition of his, and his in theirs. Then I could string together words against you in perpetual accumulation, and do it too with very little feeling other than contempt, or at least disrespect, shaking the head in assumed dignity and superiority. Probably Job thought this remark might help them to see themselves as others saw them, and more according to the reality.—Note that the word “soul” as here used carries in it more of sensibility, suffering, than the words *I* and *you* would have done. For your soul to be in my soul’s stead would give you more sorrows, woes and heart-agonies than ye are wont to think of.

5. *But* I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage *your grief*.

In the case supposed, I would do far otherwise than ye are doing. I would speak so as to give you real succor, moral strength. The moving of my lips should relieve, and help bring to an end.—To the word for “moving” of the lips some critics give the sense, *comfort*; but the better established sense is that of moving. His speech should aim to give them the relief they would need, which would indeed imply comfort.

6. Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged: and *though* I forbear, what am I eased?

But now I am not in your case but in my own. When I speak, therefore, it brings me no relief; my sorrows hold me all the same; and if I cease to speak, my sorrows leave me not—literally: What goes from me? the implied answer being—Nothing at all; I am no less full of anguish than before.

7. But now he hath made me weary: thou hast made desolate all my company.

8. And thou hast filled me with wrinkles, *which* is a witness against me: and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face.

9. He teareth *me* in his wrath, who hateth me: he

gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.

Here Job passes on to describe the way he has been treated. Some of his expressions apply more naturally to God as inflicting these calamities; others seem to refer to these professed friends, considered, perhaps, as acting under God's permissive agency.—"He hath made me weary" would bear the stronger sense: He hath worn out my strength; exhausted my powers of further endurance.—"Made desolate all my *company*"—the same word for "company" as in 15: 34, where the sense is *household*. The word must include the whole group of his household, viz., children, servants—all of whom were swept off together by one awful wave of desolation (chap. 1).—In the first clause of v. 8, our English version fails to give the sense of the Hebrew. It should be thus:—"He hath seized me (as with the grip of a giant or as the lion does his prey); this is a witness that my leanness [emaciation] riseth up against me and bears witness to my face. So onward: "His anger tears and still pursues me" (as an adversary).

10. They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me.

11. God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.

These Hebrew methods of expressing contempt occur in later writings:—"Gaping upon one with the mouth"—in Ps. 22: 13; smiting upon the cheek in Lam. 3: 30. But "gathering together against me" suggests in the original more than simple combination, viz., the further idea of fitting out a full array like an embattled host, charging in successive squadrons, with allusion probably to the fact that these three friends charged upon him one after another, availing themselves of their number and method of assault, to overwhelm him utterly.—God's agency in all this, though only permissive, was yet one of its most bitter elements.

12. I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark.

13. His archers compass me round about; he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground.

14. He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant.

Ah me! I once had a peaceful, happy life; but all that is past and gone. He [God] hath *shattered* me utterly; he hath taken me up by the neck—as a ravenous beast does his powerless prey,

and hath dashed me to pieces. He hath made me a target for his arrows.—The first word of v. 13 has the authority of the ancient versions for the sense “archers”; but its etymology and current usage favor the meaning, his *many* or *strong* ones beset me round. They are represented not so much as shooting [arrows] as encompassing him all round about by their great number.—The rest of the passage can scarcely be misapprehended.

15. I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and defiled my horn in the dust.

16. My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death;

17. Not for *any* injustice in my hands: also my prayer is pure.

Bowing before this terrible assault, Job had taken the attitude of a mourner. So we see in the history: “He rent his mantle; shaved his head; fell to the ground and worshiped” (1: 20);—“and sat down in the ashes” (2: 8).—To “thrust one’s horn into the dust” contemplates the horn as the symbol of power and dignity.—All this dishonor and bitter sorrow came upon him, not for any violence of his hands against his fellow-men, nor for any impurity [selfishness or hypocrisy] in his prayer before God. He was not conscious of any supposable cause in his treatment of men, or his worship of God, which should have occasioned these inflictions, or which might account for them.

18. O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place.

19. Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.

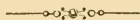
As a murdered man leaves his blood on the face of the earth, a witness to his own innocence and to the guilt of his murderer, so Job implores the earth not to hide his blood, but let it remain open to every eye as his witness.—“Let my cry have no place,” *i. e.*, where it may hide itself or be absorbed and lost to human ears. Let it echo and re-echo forever, finding no place where it can die away and become inaudible.—And now it flashes upon Job’s mind that in one respect at least, this prayer may and will be answered, for God will remember all and will be his witness. Ah, verily; “my witness is in heaven;” my *attestor*—he who will bear witness for me—is on high.

20. My friends scorn me: *but* mine eye poureth out tears unto God.

21. Oh that one might plead for a man with God, as a man *pleadeth* for his neighbor!

22. When a few years are come, then I shall go the way *whence* I shall not return.

My mockers are these professed friends. The bitterest reproaches and insults I am made to feel come from those who should comfort and befriend me. Unto God and before him only, mine eye pours out its tears!—In v. 21, there is nothing corresponding to “Oh that”!—nothing that expresses in this way his impassioned desire. The verse should rather be connected with what precedes, thus: My eye poureth forth tears unto God, that he would implead for man with God—argue a case for the interests of justice even as a son of man may have a hearing and trial with his fellow. Over and over Job has pathetically implored this favor—a hearing before God; such as the law provides for between man and man. Now this longing is intensified by a sense of being near his end, and a feeling therefore that it must be soon or never. For at the utmost a few years only will pass and I shall go that way from which I shall not return.



CHAPTER XVII.

Job concludes his speech.

This chapter runs in the same current of thought as the preceding, portraying Job, the great sufferer; his life-powers almost spent; himself mocked and not commiserated by his friends; longing for a candid, equitable hearing of his case; his sorest abuse coming from those who should have befriended him—a case of abuse that must move the indignation of all the good and react favorably for real righteousness. His claim upon the pity of all compassionate souls is the greater because he is so near the grave and has no hope elsewhere than in that under-world.

1. My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me.

My breath is—not “foul”—but *used up, gone*. The word for “breath”* being the usual one for spirit, some explain it—My vital forces are spent—which without doubt is essentially the meaning.—“My days are extinct”—like the extinguishing of a lamp; so the light of my life is virtually extinguished. “The grave is *for me*”—the only portion that now remains.

2. *Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?*

The original words indicate, not a question, but the strongest asseveration. *If* it be not so, then what is it? The sense—most truly mockers are upon me, beset me. On their insults, mine

eye must abide—literally, spend all the night. So Job speaks of the insulting, cruel remarks of his friends.

3. Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who *is* he *that* will strike hands with me?

4. For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt *them*.

“Lay down” is the language used in betting phrase by those who ask another to *give a pledge*.—The second clause: “Put me in a surety with thee;” “who will put his hand into mine?” indicates what the Hebrew tongue expresses by “striking hands” for the pledge of a solemn covenant. Here the thing to be guaranteed was, not the payment of a debt—which would be quite foreign from the subject—but a hearing before some fair tribunal. Would any one appear, and give this guaranty? His soul longed for some opportunity for such a hearing as might vindicate him from the foul and cruel aspersions cast on him by his professed friends.—In v. 4, the thought is—Thou, Lord, hast hidden [covered] the heart of my friends from wisdom. Thou hast holden their eyes that they should not see wisely; therefore thou wilt not exalt them in honor, but (as is implied) wilt bring them to dishonor. Thou wilt not indorse but wilt rebuke their cruel censures of me.

5. He that speaketh flattery to *his* friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail.

The received version is neither well sustained by Hebrew usage, nor in harmony with the course of thought. True, the first verb sometimes means, to speak, but is properly, to *put something before* one. Here “*friend*” is the object *put before*, in the sense of being surrendered into the power of another—put into their hand, *i. e.*, as a *spoil*. He who betrays his friends for a spoil into the hand of robbers; the eyes of his children shall fail—pining away in sorrow. God will scourge them with the desolation of their dearest. Job suggests that his friends have committed, not this crime precisely, but one of analogous character, equally heartless and cruel. Therefore God will curse their children after them.

6. He hath made me also a byword of the people: and aforetime I was as a tabret.

7. Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow; and all my members *are* as a shadow.

“He” in v. 6 seems to refer most naturally to God, but in this connection only as providentially permitting or suffering his friends to do this. They had made him a byword of the peoples—the tribes, round about;—a byword moreover in the sense of a notorious character who strangely illustrated how a man, appearing spotless for a season, had been suddenly shown up to be one of the worst of men. His friends had put this construction upon his case, and had thereby put all his neighbors upon defaming

his character.—In the second clause of v. 6, the English version must be changed entirely. All modern critics concur in making it essentially parallel with the first clause—"I am become a man to be spit on in the very face." They have sunk me so low in general esteem that every one feels at liberty to spit upon me.—My eye has grown dim with grief. Emaciation has made all the members of my body as a shadow—the substance utterly gone.

8. Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.

9. The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

Upright men will be astonished at this—but we must ask—*at what?* What precisely does the writer mean by "*this*"? Is it the strange *facts* of Job's case; or is it the yet more strange *interpretation* put upon those facts by his three friends?—Either construction is possible, not to say, pertinent. The former thus: The facts are indeed remarkable. Men unsympathizing, suspicious, or of shallow thought, may construe them as ye have done; but the truly upright, though amazed at such facts, will not be staggered as to their faith in God, but will be stirred up the more against vile men. The righteous will hold on his righteous way and grow only the stronger therein.—Then v. 10 calls upon his friends for a hearing of the case, not one of them having shown himself wise upon it.—On the second construction above named, thus: Strange as the facts in my case may be—an upright man smitten so fearfully of God—yet your interpretation of them is stranger still. Ye may think your view is the right one; but all the truly good and wise will stand amazed at your conclusions, and will be stirred up to stand by the truth, hold fast to their upright life, and grow only the stronger in it.—Of these two possible constructions, the former seems to me preferable because of its better connection with the context before and after. It indicates that Job had very strong faith in his doctrine as opposed to that of his friends, and fully believed that in the final result all the really good would be with him and not with them, both in their sympathies and in their interpretation of such remarkable facts in God's providence. This need not imply that he felt able to explain the reasons of God's ways toward him; but does imply that he held on to his faith in the goodness and justice of God and would still believe that God would explain and vindicate his ways in due time.

10. But as for you all, do ye return, and come now: for I can not find *one wise man* among you.

This calls for a rehearing of his case on the ground that not a man of them had shown himself really wise. This call links itself with what he had recently said of the view that all the truly good must take of his case.

11. My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.

12. They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness.

Let this be hastened on, for my life-time is short. My best days have gone; my plans of life are frustrated—those dearest treasures of my heart.—V. 12 is obscure. The most literal translation would be—They put night to day; light is near from before darkness. This might possibly mean that night comes closely up to the day with no twilight intervening, every thing working toward the greatest duration of the darkness. In like manner every thing in his case hurries toward the deep darkness of the under-world. Or the sense may be—They put night *into* day, making the night not restful as night should be, but toilsome, unrestful. The ultimate sense is probably this:—What little light [joy of life] I have is soon to be followed with darkness in the under-world.—The translation—“They change the night into day” seems to be entirely foreign from the drift of thought.

13. If I wait, the grave is my house: I have made my bed in the darkness.

14. I have said to corruption, Thou *art* my father: to the worm, *Thou art* my mother, and my sister.

15. And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?

16. They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when *our* rest together is in the dust.

The first word of v. 13 is translated by the best critics, not “*if*,” but “*lo*,” calling attention to the fact stated. *Lo*, I wait for Sheol, my house [to become such in anticipation]; I have already spread my bed there in the darkness of that world; I have made corruption and worms my father, mother, sisters; I have addressed them—thought of them—as such. I am so soon to be permanently at home with them in the grave. The literal grave for the decaying body is the stepping-stone—a sort of foregoing illustration of the lower under-world—the home of the departed spirit.—Pathetically Job asks therefore: Where is my hope? Who shall ever see any hope for me? —It may be noted here that this noun, “hope,” repeated (v. 15), affiliates with the first verb of v. 13, translated “*wait*” or “*await*” *i. e.*, look forward to as near and certain. These words are from a common root.—V. 16 answers the questions put in v. 15. “They”—these *hopes* of mine—go down to the bars of Sheol—that under-world being often represented as barred. They will be there so soon as there is rest [for me] in the dust. When the body shall find its resting-place in its own home, the grave, then all the hopes that pertain to my spirit will be found in Sheol, the under-world, the spirit-land.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Second speech of Bildad.

This speech of Bildad, after opening as usual with some sharp retort (v. 1-4) falls into the old line of argument, adding nothing new, but simply reiterating the old, viz., that God's judgments always follow the wicked till they are chased out of the world, and then curse their children after them. The gist of his argument requires him to prove the universality and certainty of this assumed law of God's administration in this world. If he can prove not merely that it is so *sometimes*, but *always*, and never otherwise; that bad men *always* suffer for their sins here, and always according to the measure and guilt of their sin; he will have made out his case. But Bildad seems quite unaware of the necessity for close and thorough discrimination on these points, and therefore satisfies himself with general statements and with the peristent assumption that there can be no exception to the general law he propounds.

1. Then answered Bildad the Shubite, and said,

2. How long *will it be ere ye* make an end of words? mark, and afterwards we will speak.

The best critics disagree on the precise sense of the Hebrew word translated "*end*" * [of words]. Gesenius says *end*; Fuerst, primarily *noose*; but symbolically, a *perversion*, the ultimate meaning being this: How long will ye pervert, distort, words? He finds support in the next clause; *understand*; try to get the true sense; then afterward, let us speak. Conant and many modern critics, guided by an Arabic analogy, give the word the sense—a *hunt*, a *search*, as of the huntsman for his prey. How long will ye make a *hunt* for mere words, to keep up the show of argument and reply? This view finds some support in the form of the question which does not ask *When?* but *How long?* It should be *when* if the sense were—to *make an end*; but *How long?* if the thought be of hunting for words. The keener sarcasm lies in the latter interpretation.—The plural, "*ye*" contemplates Job and his party—those who agree with him.

3. Wherefore are we counted as beasts, *and* reputed vile in your sight?

Bildad complains that Job withholds from his opponents due credit for sense and sagacity. "Why are we accounted as the brute [Heb.] and reputed vile in your eyes?" But the Heb. word here rendered "vile" does not occur elsewhere. Hence its precise meaning is somewhat doubtful. The choice lies between *impure* in the moral sense, and *dull-witted*, intellectually.

* קֵץ.

4. He teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?

The first clause stands as an exclamation: "One who tears himself in his rage!"—in which Bildad represents Job as badly excited, swept away and quite unmanned by his emotions—which he allows himself to characterize as "*rage*." So utterly do these disputants fail to sympathize with their afflicted friend under his unprecedented calamities!—What and how much Bildad would imply in the question—"For thee shall the earth be forsaken and the rock be removed from his place?"—is not altogether clear. Was it that Job's self-conceit made it intolerable for any one to live in the same world with him; or that his towering passion was unendurable; or that his doctrine as to God's government would desolate the earth and break down all society and order?—The second question looks toward uptearing the great foundation principles of all government and righteousness; for to this it should apply, and not to a literal tearing up of granite rocks.

5. Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine.

6. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him.

7. The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down.

From this point onward through the chapter, Bildad portrays what he considers to be the universal lot of wicked men. The description involves but very few points that require explanation.—In v. 6, "His candle *above* him," rather than "*with* him," "shall be extinguished"—this candle being suspended in his tent. His strong steps—strong but for his sin—shall be straitened—cramped, circumscribed. His own wisdom shall prove his downfall, God turning it into foolishness.

8. For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare.

9. The gin shall take *him* by the heel, *and* the robber shall prevail against him.

10. The snare is laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way.

11. Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet.

In v. 9 we should read, not "the robber" but the *snare* will take strong hold of him.—In the last clause of v. 11, terrors shall not "drive him to his feet", but *chase him close upon his heels*. They follow hard after him continually,

12. His strength shall be hunger-bitten, and destruction *shall be* ready at his side.

13. It shall devour the strength of his skin: *even* the first-born of death shall devour his strength.

14. His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors.

15. It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because *it is* none of his: brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.

In v. 13, the word twice translated "strength" seems rather to mean *the parts of his body*. In the first case the portions of his skin; in the second, his *limbs*. Destruction devours the affected portions of his skin; "the first-born of death" [its mightiest energies] devours the limbs of his body—all said with an eye to Job's disease and its effects upon his person.—In v. 14, not "his confidence shall be torn" but *he* shall be torn out of his tent, his security—*i. e.*, which was his security—his place of safety and trust. Having been thus torn out of his stronghold, he is led away to the king of terrors. Then, himself having been torn from his tent, it shall be occupied by others than either himself or his children. Literally, "There shall dwell in his tent those not *of him*"—not descended from his loins. "Brimstone shall be showered upon his habitation", according to the doom of Sodom and her neighbor cities, to which there seems to be distinct allusion.

16. His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off.

17. His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street.

18. He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world.

19. He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings.

20. They that come after *him* shall be astonished at his day, as they that went before were affrighted.

21. Surely such *are* the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of *him that* knoweth not God.

Thus in the strongest form of statement Bildad avers that every sinner—at least every notorious sinner—is exterminated from the face of the earth, there being left to him neither name nor posterity. Equally, the men who survive him and those who lived before and with him are amazed at such displays of God's righteous judgments upon the wicked. He closes with the strongest asseveration—*Such only* (not "surely", v. 21) are the habitations of the wicked; only such as this is their doom; all go in this way to their speedy and final reward. To this place of ruin must all come who know not God.

CHAPTER XIX.

Job replies.

This speech of Job reaches the climax of interest inasmuch as in it he himself reaches the very culmination of his trial, of his distressing—almost distracting—perplexity, and ultimately, of his triumph through the power of simple faith in his Redeemer.

1. Then Job answered and said,

2. How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?

3. These ten times have ye reproached me; ye are not ashamed *that* ye make yourselves strange to me.

"How long will ye vex"—he does not say *me*—but "*my soul*", for your cutting, merciless reproaches go down to the very depths of my being. Your words break me to pieces; lacerate my sensibilities; tear my heart-strings asunder. How long will ye persist in these cruel assaults upon me? How long must I endure them from men whom I have been happy to regard as my dearest and most honored friends?—"These ten times"—not intended as a precise enumeration but a general expression for *very many*—too many to comport with real friendship; too many to be accounted for on any worthy law of fraternal obligation.—"Reproached me"—by perpetually implying that my life has been altogether false and foul, and my piety only hypocrisy.—The last clause of v. 3 is expounded variously by good critics. Its principal Heb. word* rendered "make yourselves strange," occurs only here. Manifestly our English translators mistook its derivation, and consequently, its meaning. Gesenius and Conant favor this—"Without shame ye *stun* me", *i. e.*, confound me; thrust your reproachful accusations upon me so violently, fiercely, persistently, that I can scarcely take my breath. I am overwhelmed and my self-possession broken down. In later editions Gesenius, guided by its Arabic analogies, suggests this: To injure; to litigate pertinaciously. Fuerst, following the Targum, gives it—To *misjudge*. Shameless, ye misconstrue my case. Professing to sit in sober judgment as if searching for truth, ye are not ashamed to pervert the evidence and so wrong me fatally by misjudgment. This last view of the meaning seems to me best sustained.

4. And be it indeed *that* I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself.

5. If indeed ye will magnify *yourselves* against me, and plead against me my reproach:

If it be so (perhaps I can not dispute it) that I have erred—

made inadvertent mistakes—yet consider; the bitter consequences fall on myself alone. I have them all to bear. They lodge [Heb.], tarry all the night, with me. Why then should ye reproach and vilify me as if I had been bringing evil upon society; blighting the happiness of others?—In v. 5 the mutual relation of the two clauses is not well given in the English version. Better thus: If indeed ye would exalt yourselves over me—take on the airs of a higher piety and a purer morality, then *prove* against me your reproachful charges.—The thought-relations of the successive clauses (vs. 5, 6) as put in the received version are not sustained by the original and are entirely inept and void of force, as the reader will see if he will suppose Job to counsel his friends on this wise;—If ye would really boast and glory over me and would prove against me all ye charge upon me to my reproach, ye would do well to consider that *God has overthrown me*—that God is indeed wholly against me.—Yes indeed, (they would reply), that is what we have all along maintained! the very thing we have been laboring to impress upon you. God *is* utterly against you. Every pain he inflicts is a fresh proof of it! This is his way to testify that you are not by any means his friend and servant.—Now I submit that if Job were in his right mind, with any of that sense we are wont to call “common,” he could not have used such logic. It was logic for their side, not *his*.—On the other hand, for Job to say (v. 5) “Then *prove* your points against me” —is thoroughly pertinent to *his* argument.

6. Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net.

7. Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but *there is* no judgment.

“Hath overthrown me”—our English has it; but the Hebrew word demands a sense quite unlike and beyond this, viz., *hath wrested my cause*. The word is severe as used of God; but it must be our first concern, not to justify Job for using it, but to arrive with certainty at his real meaning, and then to suggest whatever the circumstances may furnish as the occasion for this strong word.—As to the sense of this Hebrew word* it is, of all words in the language the one most naturally used for distorting, perverting, justice; the very word used twice by Bildad in this sense (8: 3); the same which Elihu used (34: 12), and parallel there with the verb—“do wickedly”; the same which we meet Lam. 3: 36 and Ps. 119: 78;—always in the same sense. Moreover v. 7 involves the same idea;—I cry out of *wrong*—the wrong done me in these strange inflictions from the hand of God—but I am not answered (Heb.); “I cry aloud, but there is no justice” [done me]. Job could not see that his sins had been as much greater than those of other men as his sufferings were greater than theirs. He was deeply conscious of having honestly sought to please and obey God. He knows that in general his life has been upright

and his heart honest, and yet no man, however wicked, had suffered as he had. He knows that hosts of wicked men are openly, outrageously oppressive, cruel, satanic; and yet no great judgments fall on them from God's hand. This looks to him like perverting his cause. Judged of by the appearance thus far—estimated on the basis of what God has already done, how else could he view the case? To what other conclusion could he come?—His great mistake lay in allowing himself to make up a charge against the justice of God before he had seen the whole of the case, before the Lord had finished his retributions upon the guilty, and before he came to understand wherefore the Lord was bringing upon himself these sore afflictions. But in partial apology for Job it should be said that his friends were continually pushing him into this very mistake. They were perpetually assuming that God's providences were administered even here and now in completed justice, so that at every step, at any possible point, you might bring them under consideration and judge of their moral quality upon the basis of what is so far made visible to mortals.

As bearing upon Job's argument, the reader will notice that he had said (v. 5) "Prove against me the charges ye have made." But he would suggest here that they must not think to prove those charges by a mere inference of guilt drawn from these inflictions of God's hand upon him:—for, said he—"Know ye (imperative mood)—consider this fact—God is *not* dealing with me upon strict justice; he is even *wresting my cause*. As compared with his administration over men in general, he is visiting upon me far more than my relative share—more than, in this point of view, I deserve. Ye can not therefore infer from these inflictions that I am the worst of earth-born sinners.

8. He hath fenced up my way that I can not pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths.

9. He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.

10. He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree.

11. He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as *one of his enemies*.

12. His troops come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle.

Through these accumulated figures and poetie conceptions, Job sets forth the fearful severity of God's dealings with him. Verily he had been stripped of every thing; utterly broken down in heart, in hope; in comforts and sources of pleasure; in vital forces and life-powers, till he was on the verge of the grave. Of social pleasure from fellow-beings, none remained to him; of consolation and hope in God—alas, worst of all—even these were almost dropping out from his soul and passing beyond his grasp.—In v. 10, better: "He breaks me down on every side." Every support

on which I have leaned is torn away.—My hope hath he removed as the tree is uprooted by the roots and cast away to wither and rot.—More yet, he makes his anger burn against me—(so it seems to me); he treats me as an enemy; he brings out all his hosts of armed men to surround me and lay siege to my tent as in the fierce assaults of war.

13. He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me.

14. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.

15. They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight.

As Job saw things, it came directly from God's hand that his brethren had withdrawn their sympathy and made themselves distant and regardless; that all his old acquaintances were estranged from him—estranged not "verily" but *wholly*, altogether—this being the sense of Job's word. Even the members of his household—his maid-servants—came to regard him as a foreigner—one to whom they owed no obligation and whom it were but natural to despise or even hate. "I am become an alien in their eyes"—a fact adduced to show how utterly he had fallen from the position of esteem and honor which every patriarch rightfully held in his own household.

16. I called my servant, and he gave *me* no answer; I entreated him with my mouth.

17. My breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for the children's *sake* of mine own body.

18. Yea, young children despised me; I arose and they spake against me.

19. All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me.

Even his servant had lost all due respect for him so utterly as to give no heed to his call, or even to his entreaty. "My breath is offensive even to my wife," and no inspirations of conjugal love prompt her to faithful nursing and kind offices to her suffering husband.—The last clause of v. 17 is construed variously by the best critics. The leading questions are whether the first Heb. word is a noun or a verb, and in either case, *what it means*. As a verb, some give it the sense—being offensive; others—to make supplication. Taken as a noun, it may signify *my kindness* ("Fuerst"); or "*my supplication*" (Gesenius). The connecting verb is to be brought forward from the previous clause, thus: My breath is offensive to my wife; my kindness (or my supplication) to children of the same womb, *i. e.*, to my natural brethren. If taken as a verb, it would read—I am offensive to my own brothers.—The last words can not mean—children of my own body (for the word means *womb*) but children of the *same* womb as

myself—born of the same mother. We may remember that Job's own children were all dead.—Young children, trained in oriental life to honor the aged, yet despise me; when I rise up and respectful recognition is in place, they speak always *against* me.—The translation—"my inward friends"—does not give well the sense of Job's words, which mean—The men of my counsel; those whom I had taken fully into my confidence, and was accustomed to consult as my best friends. That these should have so turned against him as to *abhor* him is a fearful indication of a terrible fall from esteem into contempt.

20. My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.

21. Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.

22. Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?

Job's afflictions do not end with this universal and sovereign contempt from every class of living men, women and children. If only his health had been perfect, and every organ, nerve and tissue of his body were in prime order, he might have fallen back within himself with some resources still remaining for enjoyment. But alas, here, too, he was a broken down man! Emaciated, wasted away, bones cleaving to skin and flesh—what remained to him of real living?—"Escaped with the skin of his teeth" is a proverb used to show how little had been saved to him out of the wreck of his bodily frame. *How much* was this?—Most of the visible organs of the body are covered with a skin; but teeth have none. To escape therefore with only "the skin of the teeth" is to escape with nothing!—This grouping of his pains brought upon his soul the keenest possible sense of unutterable desolation and forced from his lips this imploring cry for pity and compassion:—"Have pity upon me, O my friends! Have pity upon me, for the most bitter pang of all is yet untold—reserved to this last utterance; *"The hand of God hath touched me!"* I could bear any thing else; but this, how can I bear! Oh, if only his smile remained to me, how would my heart exult! If I could but know that all these inflictions came from some other hand than his, and that neither his hand nor heart were in them, how would this heaviest of my burdens be lifted from my poor crushed heart!

"Pursue me as God"—should naturally mean—as *God does*—assuming it to be your duty to become the executioners of his sentence of death against me. Yet Job's meaning may perhaps be—Why do ye assume to be acting under God and in his behalf in the torments ye inflict? Or, why are your eyes so blind to my woes and your hearts so merciless? The last clause is quite in harmony with this view—"And are not satisfied with my flesh—tacitly comparing them to savage beasts who devour the flesh of

their victim and are yet unsatisfied, and still go on to lap his blood and toss about his bare bones, and glory in their power to destroy! Remarkably the orientals compare the keen remorseless appetite of the slanderer who makes utter havoc with the reputation of his victim, to the wild beast, tearing the flesh and cranking the bones of his prey. So the Chaldee word in Dan. 3: 8 for "*accused*" signifies—*They ate up the pieces of the Jews*—devoured them piecemeal. Under the same figure Paul said to the Galatians (Gal. 5: 15)—"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

23. Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!

24. That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

One among the sharpest of his griefs, only next below that of being smitten and disowned of God, was the going down to his grave, traduced, maligned,—his good name blackened; his once fair reputation utterly stricken down, with none to plead in his behalf! O might he only be permitted to bear his protest against this insupportable wrong! O might his words be put on some enduring record. Would they were *written*! O let them be inscribed not merely in a book—some sort of book—but in *the* book (this is what he said) *the* well known book—the genealogical records of his tribe and people, into which records important paragraphs of personal history were not infrequently inserted, as we may see (Gen. 5: 24, 29 and 10: 8–12 and 1 Chron. 4: 39–43 and 5: 1, 2, 9, 10, 18–22, etc.) And yet more—to make the record imperishable—with iron pen and lead, let them be engraven in the rock forever! Such inscriptions on the everlasting rocks were well understood by the men of the great east countries, not a few of them having endured to the present day. O could we find, far away in that land of Uz these testimonials which Job would fain have recorded there!—As to the instrument and mode for such records, we must not think of a pen made of both iron and lead; but a pen of iron only, cut the letters in the hard face of the rock; then melted lead, poured upon the chiseled surface, filled the cavities and made the writing indelible.

25. For I know *that* my Redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth:

26. And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

27. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another: *though* my reins be consumed within me.

These verses constitute a passage of unsurpassed interest. Nothing else in the speeches of Job equals them. We might perhaps say, nothing that has come down to us from the first three thou-

sand years of our world's history can be put above them—(a) In point of the light thrown by them upon the earliest revelations of God to men; (b) For their bearing upon the faith and hope of God's tried and tempted people; (c) For their tone of moral sublimity and of glorious triumph of faith over sense—of trust in God, despite of the utmost accumulation of doubt, temptation, suffering and physical prostration.

We can not do justice to this passage without a somewhat careful, and, if need be, extended consideration of the following points:

1. The connection of thought in which they stand and through which they are reached:

2. The real sense of the words: their just exposition as words and phrases:

3. The great truths which these words involve:

4. The antecedent knowledge which the words seem to assume and imply:

5. The importance of the passage as being the great crisis in Job's experience—the hour of his triumph over the hot and terrible temptations to despair which had almost cost him his soul:

6. Certain indefensible constructions of the passage.

1. The first point—the connection of thought in which these words stand—has been brought out in part by the preceding context. We therefore need only recall to mind that Job, stripped suddenly and utterly of his great wealth; bereft of children in one day; then smitten with a painful, loathsome and prospectively fatal disease—has had all these severe sufferings intensified many fold by the mistaken views and the consequently severe judgments of his three friends. Under the firm conviction that these inflictions from God proved Job to be the chief of sinners they ceased not for one moment to push this doctrine upon him mercilessly, allowing no place in their souls for even the sympathies of our common humanity.—Under the pressure of these reiterated assertions and arguments, it seems to have cost Job his utmost fortitude to hold fast the clear and invincible convictions of his soul that he had been sincere and honest toward God and never had played the hypocrite. No words can do justice to his harassing perplexities and agonies over the question—Wherefore has God sent on me these afflictions? He begged that God would give him a hearing and reveal the reasons of his dark ways; but no answer came from God to these prayers. He tried to rebut the arguments of his friends; but all the facts of his case were apparently against him and on their side.—In this chapter Job groups in rapid succession the salient points of his case. His friends vexing his soul and putting every sensibility to torture; God wresting his cause and refusing him any hearing or answer to his prayers; a despised man among his fellow-beings, sunk below respectful notice; his good name foully maligned and his last hope for vindication on earth fading into darkness—O, said he, that, before I die and go hence, my words of complaint and self-defense might be written, inscribed in the records of my people, engraved

in the everlasting rock! At this point—as low perhaps in happiness and hope as a human soul can ever sink—he reaches the crisis and makes this startling, glorious transition! There is one joy left to me: *I know that my Redeemer liveth!* I know a Redeemer is yet to come, the Great and Blessed Friend of most friendless men! I shall one day see him; my cause, therefore, is far indeed from being hopeless!

2. We must look more closely into these words of Job, to reach if possible their true and full significance.—The expressions throughout are very brief and most of them not a little obscure because of their brevity. Probably no critical student ever put his mind to their interpretation without wishing he could ask Job himself to explain his meaning more fully.—Unfortunately for the merely English reader the received translation is very imperfect. The unusually large number of words in italics should suggest this.

The first clause is essentially right—being so plain it could not well be misapprehended. “I know that my Redeemer liveth.” The Hebrew, however, makes the word “I” specially emphatic: *I for my part; I to my joy; I whatever may be true of others—I know this glorious truth!*

We may be liable, perhaps, inadvertently, to include more ideas under the word “Redeemer” than Job had in his mind. We can not wisely assume that he used the word in its broad, full-orbed gospel sense. We are forbidden to give it a sense so broad by two general considerations:—(a) The earlier Old Testament sense of this word was more limited than its later New Testament sense: And (b) We must suppose that Job used it in a sense germane to his then pending case—*i. e.*, that in his lips, “My Redeemer” was essentially—my vindicator; one who will espouse and plead my cause, lift me out of these depths of darkness and despair, and be in very deed the God of my salvation.—The Old Testament sense of the word for “Redeemer” * seems to have meant, first of all—a man’s “next friend,” usually the nearest blood relative; in every case, the friend whose office it was to stand by him in trouble; to redeem his estate from incumbrance; to interpose when necessary in behalf of his personal liberty; and not least, to avenge his blood if unrighteously shed. This man was the Redeemer (the Goel)—often translated “the avenger of blood,” of the Mosaic Law.†—Both the name and this sense of it appear, not in Hebrew history only, but in all oriental life. Thus the word “Redeemer” obtained its earliest significance.—Further onward as used (*e. g.*) by Isaiah, the Redeemer of Israel was their national Defender, the Savior of the Zion of God—that Zion being then embosomed and represented in the external fortunes as well as the religious life of the chosen people. Compare Isa. 49: 7, 26

* Goel.

† Cases of its usage may be seen in Num. 35: 12, 19, 21 and Deut. 19: 6, 12 and Lev. 25: 25, 48, 49 and in Ruth 2: 20 and 3: 9, 12 and 4: 14.

and 41 : 14 and 43 : 14 and 44 : 6 and 47 : 4, and also Ex. 6 : 6 and Ps. 19 : 14 and 78 : 35.

That Job should use the word with a meaning that reached and met those deepest wants of his sorrow-stricken heart, is the demand of the soundest good sense. The question then uppermost in his mind was not whether his sins could be forgiven without an atoning Lamb for sacrifice, nor does it seem even to have borne specially on the point of forgiveness in any respect; but rather upon the point of vindication from the cruel charges of supreme wickedness and upon the question whether God were in fact his enemy or really his friend. On these points his very soul felt most intensely his need of a Redeemer in that early Old Testament sense, and therefore in that sense we must suppose his words are to be understood. The question whether the very early prophetic intimations of a Messiah may have shed some few rays through tradition or otherwise upon his mind will be considered in the sequel.—The original words translated—"He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth"—are more closely rendered and perhaps better represented thus:—He, the last One, shall arise upon the earth. "Arise" however, should be taken in the sense of putting forth his power in signal manifestations; as in Ps. 3 : 7 and 7 : 6 and 12 : 5 and 44 : 26 and 68 : 1 and 102 : 13 and Isa. 60 : 1, 2. "*Arise*" is precisely the sense of the Heb. verb; but this is not the word in common use for *stand*. The ultimate significance, however, is not materially different.—The word for "latter" or last may refer simply to time—the latter day; or it may indicate this as the latest among several manifestations of God before men on the earth.

In v. 26, the Hebrew gives us no word for "though;" none for "worms;" none for "body." The words it does give will naturally be translated thus: "And after this my skin they have cut in pieces and even outside of my flesh, I shall see God."—It is generally conceded that the verb—they have cut or destroyed—might be equally well translated in the simple passive—*is destroyed*. The word for "*this*" seems to be made emphatic by position, thus: After my skin is destroyed even this one, this already almost ruined, perished, skin. Job uses the word "skin" to represent his entire body, wasted, destroyed and turned back to its primal dust, because his disease was one of the skin so that pain perpetually turned his thought to this part of his animal frame. The original verb suggests a skin hacked, chipped, marred to ruin—thought of therefore as utterly destroyed, by his terrible leprosy, and perhaps beyond death, by the corruption of the grave.

The last clause of v. 26 begins, not with "yet", for which we find no equivalent Hebrew word; but rather *and*, connecting the words that next follow as still another similar circumstance in his condition. "*And apart from my flesh, I shall see God*". The sense of the Hebrew can not be—*in* my flesh; nor can it well mean—looking out from a body of flesh; but must be, *apart*

from my flesh; removed from a body of flesh and existing without, separated from it. After he shall have laid down this mortal body and shall be no longer in this home of flesh, he will yet see God. The established usage of the Hebrew preposition before the word "flesh" demands this sense: the parallel sentiment of the clause next preceding supports it. The human body is seen destroyed.

In v. 27, the word *I* is made emphatic by the insertion of the pronoun: Whom *I* myself and for myself shall see, and mine eyes and not another's eyes for me, shall behold. He means to say that in that far future day, he shall be the same being, retaining still his personal identity, seeing for himself and with his own joyous vision the glorious form of his Redeemer.—It should, however, be said that, owing to the indefiniteness of the Hebrew tongue, this word translated "another" * may be either subject or object, *i. e.*, may be read either—I and not another shall see; or I shall see him and not another than him. I have preferred the former construction as being in harmony with the strain of thought. Moreover there seems to be no special pertinence in saying—Not another than my Redeemer—for there was no ground to fear any mistake *as to his identity*. But Job, passing through the anticipated changes of death and the underworld, might well be comforted in the thought that his own undying spirit would still be the same.—Yet farther: Since this Hebrew word often means a *stranger, foreigner*, and hence, in some connections, an enemy, some critics have given it this construction:—Whom I shall see, not as a stranger or an enemy, but a friend and a brother. The objections to this interpretation are, that a *Redeemer* could not possibly be either stranger or enemy—the essential idea of the term being the very opposite of this—so that there could be no occasion to suggest this; also, that it is only in special connections that the word can mean an enemy. Moreover, we have the Hebrew usage for the sense above preferred—another as opposed to himself; *e. g.*, Prov. 27: 2: "Let another praise thee, and not thine own lips."

Noticeably, the last clause, which literally would read—"My reins are consumed in my bosom"—stands with no connecting particle corresponding to the English word "though". We are left to supply what the sense of the verse seems to demand. Some critics suppose that the word "*though*" or "*when*" corresponds best with the exigencies of the clause—in this sense: Despite of the utter wasting away of all my present life-powers, I am sure my own eyes shall yet see the King in his glory—see him as my own Blessed Redeemer!

Another quite different construction harmonizes well with the usage of the Hebrew words and has the sanction of Gesenius and Fuerst in their standard Lexicons; viz., this:—"My soul in its deepest sensibilities has pined away with longing desire within

me". In this construction we make the perfect tense of the verb prominent: This *has been* my experience; my soul *has been* in an agony, wasting away under consuming grief, for this blessed vision. That this clause stands entirely independent, having no recognized grammatical connection with what precedes, favors this construction. It is an after-thought, by itself.

In a passage of so much interest and importance, the reader will be gratified to see how modern critics translate it.

Noyes thus:

"Yet I know that my Vindicator liveth,
And will hereafter stand up on the earth;
And though with my skin this body be wasted away,
Yet without my flesh shall I see God.
Yea, I shall see him my friend;
My eyes shall behold him, and not another:
For this my soul panteth within me."

Barnes (vol. 1, 276) thus:

"For I know that my Avenger liveth,
And that hereafter he shall stand upon the earth;
And though after my skin this [flesh] shall be destroyed,
Yet even without my flesh shall I see God;
Whom I shall see for myself,
And mine eyes shall behold, and not another,
Though my vitals are wasting away within me."

Prof. Green (p. 201) in this way:

"And I know that my Redeemer liveth, and last on earth shall he arise; and after my skin, which has been destroyed thus, and out of my flesh shall I see God."

Prof. Conant as follows:

"But I, I know my Redeemer lives,
And in after-time will stand upon the earth;
And after this my skin is destroyed,
And without my flesh, shall I see God,
Whom I, for myself, shall see,
And my eyes behold and not another,
When my reins are consumed within me."

3. It is in place next to group together the great truths which these words involve:

(1) God had already provided and promised a Redeemer for his people;—a Redeemer then living but not yet sent down to stand on the earth—a Redeemer personal to each and every one of all his people; the real Friend, the next and best Friend, of every suffering, needy soul.

(2) This Redeemer was truly divine—worthy to be called *God*, and to be so regarded.

(3) This Redeemer would appear at some future day in the visible manifestation upon this earth, not of his power only but of his very person.

(4) Job believed he should see him, even after his then present body should have perished, yet outside of any material flesh, he should see this Redeemer for himself, to his own inexpressible joy.

(5) This Redeemer would appear for his personal *vindication*, and consequently would fulfill the functions of a final judge upon the moral issues of the present life, to right its wrongs and administer upon all moral deeds done in the body. This idea of a future judgment is brought out very distinctly in the verses next following.

(6) Consequently the passage involves the doctrine of a *future life*; implies it so necessarily and absolutely as to put it beyond a doubt.

(7) This after-life is a *conscious* as opposed to an unconscious state of being.

(8) This future life has an unbroken, continuous *identity* with the present—an identity not of *being* only, but of interest and relationship—the future life being most vitally related to the present, so that Job can assume that his character, though vilified here, will be vindicated there.

This group of implied and involved truths, each reader will readily see, presents points of immense interest, especially when taken in connection with the age, the country and the people among whom Job was living.—Some have thought that the passage involves Job's belief in a future resurrection. I can not see that it does. There is nothing here to forbid it; nor do I see any thing here that necessarily demands it. When we reject the translation—"In my flesh I shall see God," and put it; *Apart from my flesh, despite of its being wasted away by disease and death, we take away from the passage that which has been supposed to imply a resurrection.* Furthermore, in the words (v. 27) "Whom I shall *see* for myself, and mine eyes shall *behold*," Job may use the words "see," "behold," in the sense of a spiritual vision, an apprehension of his Redeemer's presence which does not involve the physical eye, and therefore does not imply a soul seeing through a risen material body.

4. *The antecedent knowledge assumed here, on the great and vital points of divine truth.*

There is no occasion to prove that this passage assumes as previously known the being of a God—even of a personal God who is moral Ruler and final Judge; and of a future life—a real continuation of the present with no break in the continuity of a conscious existence. The points demanding special inquiry are—whether Job had previously known that God was truly the personal friend of his people, and had both provided and promised them a Redeemer who should at some future day come upon the earth to manifest his presence and his love in this very world of ours. In other words, had some rays of that glorious first promise of Eden—made somewhat more clear to Noah and next to Abraham—reached the eye of this patriarch of the early ages? I do not see

how this can be rationally doubted. The future coming of a divine Redeemer to plant his feet upon this sin-cursed earth and to wage the fight against Satan and his legions on this battleground of time, was not a doctrine to be dreamed out in the imaginations of men, was not a fact to be assumed, apart from direct revelation from God. And yet it was a fact of inexpressible moment to the sons of men. It bore upon its face a glorious testimony to the love of the Great Father, and to the profound interest felt in his heart for the moral results of the great conflict in which Satan heads the party of sin and evil against the Almighty. It revealed the chief agencies he proposed to use in achieving his foreordained victory.—Now it was every thing to lost men to know that God had a reserved force to bring into the field in his own best time which would surely crush Satan under his feet and give all the kingdoms of earth to his Son. Let it then be well considered that these truths, put in substantially this definite point of light, were the substance of the first great promise—that given to the fallen pair in Eden. Shall we believe that this precious promise dropped out of the living thought of that succession of holy men who walked with God from Adam to Noah and from Noah to Abraham, and onward? Especially, can this be made to appear probable in view of the virtual renewal of this promise to Noah—"God shall dwell in the tents of Shem;" and to Abraham—"In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed?" The probability seems to me to rise to substantial certainty that these promises were remembered, cherished, wrought into the patient, trusting life and developed into the stern, unfaltering faith of those earliest saints of time. Naturally they would form the staple of those inspiring traditions which passed down from generation to generation of God's real children and which spread abroad outward into other lands, together with such traditions as that of the flood and of God's special manifestations to men from time to time in dreams and visions of the night.—Let it now be carefully considered that Job's friends and doubtless himself as well had a traditional knowledge of the flood, which Eliphaz describes, even to the sayings of those giants in moral hardihood and wickedness (22: 15-18). How then can we rationally suppose they had never heard of the great promise of a Redeemer to come? That Job had this knowledge is a fact, for it stands out in the words of this passage. The origin of this knowledge in his mind is the problem—to be accounted for as given him either by direct revelation at this juncture of his experience; or by tradition;—with the odds greatly in favor of the latter. The supernatural should never be assumed when the natural amply accounts for the facts of the case.—This view can be gainsayed only by assuming the early and almost universal ignorance of mankind—the very early lapse into barbarism and idolatry of the great nations and tribes of antiquity and the extinction of those grand traditions, freighted with the divine light vouchsafed to the sainted patriarchs from Adam to Abraham.

In my judgment this assumption has embraced too much and has rested on quite insufficient authority.—The subject is too vast to be treated exhaustively here. Let it suffice to suggest that Egypt had the doctrine of the future life, of the soul's immortality, and of future rewards and punishments; and if Egypt, then doubtless Edom and the renowned sages of the great east country of Arabia. Yet further, this book of Job is itself good proof that his people had *not* lapsed into the grosser forms of idolatry—the worship of the heavenly bodies being referred to as then known, and *this only*.

5. Let us briefly note the importance of this passage and of the grand truths it involves, as forming a crisis in Job's moral struggle—the hour of his triumph over the terrible temptations which had almost driven him into despair. In reading thoughtfully this 19th chapter we pass from point to point in his recital of his griefs and note the rising tide of his emotions and the deepening agonies of his soul, till at length we hear him passionately exclaim—Oh that my words of self-vindication were written in the enduring records of my people! Oh, that they were graven with iron pen in the everlasting rock!—Then all suddenly it flashes over his soul—Why should I long so passionately for such a doubtful and at best, but feeble vindication, when I know that I have a great and glorious Vindicator on high; when I know he will one day arise upon this earth; when I know these tear-dimmed eyes will surely see him and this long stricken heart will feel the consolations of his presence and the inexpressible relief of his vindication! Ah, this was one of the things he had most longed for—that God would somehow give him a hearing; would bear to him some testimony of his substantial approbation; and give him the joy of his personal friendship and favor.—This was such a revelation of God as his broken heart needed. It availed (as it should) to lift him out of the “Slough of Despond” and plant his feet on the rock of trust in a living Redeemer—a Redeemer given to suffering man, sure to come and reveal himself personally to human eyes in God's appointed time—a Redeemer whom Job knows he shall see in some bright day of the future, despite of the perishing of his already wasted mortal flesh. It was faith giving the victory over sense.

Let us not fail to notice that Job's salvation from the combined assaults of the devil and of his mistaken friends—this uplifting of his sinking heart above his fearful sufferings and terrible temptations—was due, apparently, to his recalling to mind that great primal promise of a Redeemer. The case serves to show how vital to the religious life in man were those rays of light revealed from the heavenly fountain, even though few and dim. How could fallen man have ever groped his way through the darkness of sin and doubt, and fought his fight against the powers of hell, if God had not spoken out of heaven some blessed words of promise? This case of Job is a grand illustration of the saving power of truth revealed from God as compared with the best light

of nature, even though supplemented with the noblest intuitions and assertions of the best human thought and heart.

6. Of other constructions of this passage, not in my view defensible, the most prominent is that which assumes its reference to some divine interposition to vindicate Job in the very near future, before his natural death; either that which is recorded chap. 38-42, or something else of analogous sort.—It should suffice to refute this construction that Job manifestly implies that he must die *before* he sees his Redeemer. The coming of his Redeemer to stand upon this earth is far in the future beyond his own mortal life. The exposition given above rests upon the fair and even necessary sense of Job's words, supported moreover by its entire and even beautiful harmony with the context—*i. e.*, with Job's intense desire for some due vindication of his character. The theory which assumes *no future life* in this passage and *no Redeemer* to appear on the earth in the then remote ages of our world's history, but only some manifestations to be made in Job's behalf before his death—disregards the obvious and necessary sense of Job's words, and is therefore unfounded and indefensible.

28. But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?

29. Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath *bringeth* the punishments of the sword, that ye may know *there is* a judgment.

The first word of v. 28, giving the relation of these two verses to what precedes, is not well put by the word "But." It is rather *If*, or *Because*, *for*—to be translated thus: *For* ye say; or *Because* ye say. The spirit, the animus of your speeches is—How will we pursue him! How will we overwhelm him with our arguments and cut him with our reproaches!—Since ye are in spirit saying this, while yet "the root of the matter" [intrinsic rectitude] is found in me, I warn you to stand in fear of the sword [of justice]; for [such] wrath is a crime for the sword [to punish], that ye may know there is a judgment [for the sins of men]. Job holds that the animus of their assault upon him is vindictive; that neither his own moral state of heart nor his outward life by any means justify such vindictive persecution; and that human law or God's righteous retributions (probably the latter) will surely take cognizance of their crime and cause them to know that there is a coming judgment.

CHAPTER XX.

Zophar replies.

This last speech of Zophar makes no real advance in the general argument. It is simply a reiteration of the very points which have appeared in every speech made by either of the three friends;—viz. that wicked men never prosper beyond the moment, but meet with all manner of reverses, disappointments, calamities. On these he rings the changes and accumulates his general statements which he puts as the ever recurring facts of human life, assuming throughout that to this course of the divine providence, there neither are nor can be any exceptions. He leaves it to Job to infer that this universal law of God's administration toward the wicked *means him*—must certainly include him—for such an accumulation of judgments as those under which they see Job suffering never fell on the vilest of men before!—Expanding his general sentiment into particulars he shows that the higher a wicked man rises in apparent prosperity, the deeper and more terrible his fall (4-11); that his good things (like unwholesome sweetmeats) beget fatal disease (v. 12-17), and that the never-failing law of restitution and retaliation makes his retribution inevitable—in which all heaven and earth conspire; the hand of man and the hand of God combine to make it fatally effective (18-29).

1. Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,
2. Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, and for *this* I make haste.
3. I have heard the check of my reproach, and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer.

Zophar opens with an apology for speaking. He is so pressed in spirit and so stung with Job's reproaches, that he can restrain himself no longer.—Perhaps we may assume an undertone of feeling like this:—You speak of being rasped and stung with the insinuations and reproaches of your three friends; and pressed in spirit even to agony, under their severe words: but please remember—*that* sense of suffering keen reproach is not all on one side: the pressure on the heart to speak out is not confined to yourself. I too feel my heart hot within me. My soul burns to make answer and to rebut the reproachful charges you too have made. So that on both sides this discussion had waxed warm and had made the hearts of old friends sore.—Therefore (*i. e.*, because of your severe reproaches) do my thoughts within me press me to make reply. Because of this there is eager haste within me.—In v. 3, the Heb. verb being in the future tense (indicating at least *unfinished* time) should not be read—"I have heard," but *I shall* or *must* hear—the sense being: You will never desist from it; I am

doomed to be tormented thus; and must therefore have my say in self-defense.

4. Knowest thou *not* this of old, since man was placed upon earth,

5. That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite *but* for a moment?

The word "*not*" is wanting in the Hebrew. More literally, therefore, we may read—Dost thou know this to have been the case from most ancient times? Art thou aware of this fact? Thou hast spoken (strangely), as if this fact had escaped thee—were quite forgotten.—Zophar would admit that wicked men do sometimes triumph, exulting in their prosperity; but maintains that it is very short—only for a moment.

6. Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds;

7. *Yet* he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he?

The translation (v. 7) "*like his own dung*"—should give place to one less low and disgusting in its associations, and at the same time, more sensible;—viz., *according to his greatness*, so shall he perish forever, *i. e.*, his fall shall be deep as his exaltation was high. The Heb. word readily admits this sense—that which has been *rolled up* and is therefore high, lofty. The Arabic analogies sustain this sense.—The disputants in Job are sometimes severe, but never descend to low, vulgar comparisons. That one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, they are not given to taking.

8. He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.

9. The eye also *which* saw him shall *see him* no more; neither shall his place any more behold him.

"Gone like a dream when one awaketh"—vanished away, leaving not a trace behind—is a telling image. Who has not felt its force? So (Zophar affirms) the wicked man, lofty and strong though he may have been, disappears from the face of the world.

10. His children shall seek to please the poor, and his hands shall restore their goods.

11. His bones are full of *the sin* of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.

Of the first clause in v. 10, two constructions are possible: that of our English version, supported by Gesenius, "His sons shall seek the favor of the poor, or what comes to the same thing—shall *conciliate the poor*; *i. e.*, by restoring the goods extorted from them". And the following, given by Conant; viz., "His sons, the weak shall oppress"—so powerless are they. The former

construction assumes that the wicked man of whom he speaks has robbed and plundered the poor, and now in retribution, his sons are forced to conciliate their good-will, glad to restore what their father had taken away by robbery or fraud. The relation of the second clause to the first favors this. In verse 11, there is no occasion to supply the words—"of the sin", and therefore they should not be supplied, there being no such words in the original, and nothing in the connection to demand them. Better thus: "His bones are full of youth", *i. e.*, of youthful vigor; yet shall it lie down with him in the dust—it shall not save him from an early death.

12. Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, *though* he hide it under his tongue:

13. *Though* he spare it, and forsake it not; but keep it still within his mouth:

14. *Yet* his meat in his bowels is turned, *it is* the gall of asps within him.

Wickedness is like sweetmeats, delicious to the taste, but wont to turn to acidity and gall in the stomach.—In v. 13, "spare it"—be mercifully tender of it; never let it go; yet does it turn to poison in his bowels!

15. He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly.

16. He shall suck the poison of asps: the viper's tongue shall slay him.

17. He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.

Still retaining the same general figure, yet applying it in detail, Zophar thinks of him as swallowing down the riches he may have unrighteously acquired; but his stomach sickens; he vomits it all up. God dispossesses him of them (Heb.)—In v. 17, the word for "rivers" refers to channels cut for irrigation—associated, therefore, with great fertility. He shall never see such symbols of fertility; butter and honey shall not flow freely forth for him.

18. That which he labored for shall he restore, and shall not swallow *it* down: according to *his* substance *shall* the restitution *be*, and he shall not rejoice *therein*.

19. Because he hath oppressed *and* hath forsaken the poor; *because* he hath violently taken away a house which he builded not;

In the last clause of v. 18, the more precise sense is—It shall be as borrowed treasures, not his own, and therefore he shall not rejoice in them, but shall be compelled to restore.—V. 19 should close, not with a suspended but with a completed sense: "Because he hath oppressed, hath forsaken the poor, the houses

he has seized by violence he shall not build up. They shall avail him nothing". Houses seized by extortion shall perish from his hands. A house so obtained he shall never build up into a quiet and sure dwelling for himself.

20. Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly, he shall not save of that which he desired.

21. There shall none of his meat be left; therefore shall no man look for his goods.

The first word of v. 20 should not be "Surely" but *Because*—the sense being this: *Bécause* he knew no rest in his bosom; *because* his avarice was insatiable—his greed for money quenchless, never leaving his soul at rest—therefore he shall save nothing of what he delighted in.—So also in v. 21, the two clauses express one thought—thus: Nothing escaped his devouring (literally his "*eating*"); therefore his prosperity shall not be enduring (Heb. strong, firm). Our English version, "*look for*", quite mistakes the root from which the verb comes.

22. In the fullness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits: every hand of the wicked shall come upon him.

23. *When* he is about to fill his belly, *God* shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain *it* upon him while he is eating.

At the point where he seemed to have every thing in all-sufficiency, suddenly he is in straits, shorn of all. Every hand—not of the "*wicked*", but of the *wretched* shall come upon him. Probably he means—of those whom his oppressions have made wretched; every such hand comes upon him in retribution for his violence.—The next clause is better as an exclamation:—"His belly shall be filled"!—Last clause of v. 23:—"God shall rain his food upon him"—his food being that with which God shall fill his belly—judgments sent in swift and fearful retribution. Compare Ps. 11: 6: "Upon the wicked God shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest—the portion of their cup".

24. He shall flee from the iron weapon, *and* the bow of steel shall strike him through.

25. It is drawn, and cometh out of the body; yea, the glittering sword cometh out of his gall: terrors *are* upon him.

The shafts of an avenging God pierce him through and through with deadly wounds. While he would escape one weapon by flight, another smites him (v. 25);—he draws out the arrow from the wound it has made.—"The glittering sword" or the gleaming weapon—the word often used for the *lightning's flash*, coming out of his gall—the wound is of course deadly. The wounded man sees this and terrors seize upon him! Alas, he must die!

26. All darkness *shall be* hid in his secret places: a fire not blown shall consume him; it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle.

27. The heavens shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him.

28. The increase of his house shall depart, *and his goods* shall flow away in the day of his wrath.

29. This *is* the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.

"All darkness is hoarded for his treasure"—"darkness" as usual being symbolic of all extremest calamity. How it takes the place of his choicest treasures!—"A fire not blown", but one self-originated as if it were a spontaneous combustion, starting, no one knows how or whence—consumes him. Most terrible retribution springs upon him from every unexpected quarter. It devours all that have survived in his tent.—Does this tacitly allude to the tornado which buried all Job's children under the ruins of the one house where they were feasting?

Heaven comes down to disclose his sin; earth rises up as if to finish the awful retribution!—All the accumulations of his estate ("increase of his house") shall "go into captivity" (the sense suggested by the Hebrew word), passing away as if borne off by a conquering foe.—So the wicked man meets his doom under the retributions ordained by the Almighty!



CHAPTER XXI.

Job's reply.

Job grapples vigorously with the one main argument which his friends have perpetually pressed upon him. Whereas they have maintained that *in fact* the wicked experience their retribution in this life—a retribution at once perfect in degree and embracing all the wicked without exception—Job here replies—that the facts are not as they have claimed, for the wicked do live on; become old and mighty in power (v. 7); their offspring live prosperously and their wealth is secure (v. 8–12); they spend their days in the midst of all worldly good, and then die suddenly, with no lingering, wasting sickness (v. 13); they become defiant toward God and give him neither fear nor homage (v. 14–16); you can not say their candle is put out soon and suddenly (v. 17, 18); and it matters little to them what God does with their children after they are dead (v. 19–22). There are extreme inequalities in the dispensations of God's providence (v. 23–26). I see through the

fallacies of your argument (v. 27, 28); the testimony of men of great travel shows that the case of the wicked holds over for a future retribution, and is not completed in this life (v. 29, 30). They die in honor and lie down in no ignoble or dishonored graves (v. 31-33), so that your consolations for me lack the element of truthfulness and hence avail me nothing (v. 34).

1. But Job answered and said,

2. Hear diligently my speech, and let this be your consolations.

3. Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on.

Give me at least this consolation (since I can expect nothing better from you);—give me your respectful attention; hear me through, and then go on to abuse and reproach me with disparaging insinuations—if so ye will!

4. As for me, is my complaint to man? and if *it were so*, why should not my spirit be troubled?

5. Mark me, and be astonished, and lay *your* hand upon *your* mouth.

6. Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.

Is it *to man* that I make my complaint? Nay, verily; but to God. Inasmuch as the great questions that perplex and distress me even to agony, all lie between myself and God, why should I not be troubled?—In v. 4, our English Bible reverses the true sense, for it assumes that he might well be troubled if his complaint lay with man. The mistake is made by misconceiving the Heb. word translated "*if*." It is not *if*, but simply indicates and asks a second question, corresponding to that in the first clause. The first clause assumes a negative answer as but too well known to his opponents to need argument. Hence I would paraphrase:—"As for me, is my complaint to man? [Since it is not, but is to and of God] why should I *not* be troubled?—Look upon me and take in the whole of my case:—ye will be astonished! Lay your hand in silent amazement upon your mouth! For myself, when I recall these facts of my case, I am full of fear; my flesh trembles! Oh how I dread the manifest wrath of the Almighty! What may not come next!"

7. Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?

8. Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes.

9. Their houses *are* safe from fear, neither *is* the rod of God upon them.

But, passing these strange and fearful facts of my suffering, and taking up your main arguments against me, I must ask you how,

on your theory, you account for it that the wicked live long and prosperously, and become great in power? And how is it that their children are established peaceably before their eyes, within their own tents, in the joy of a happy household—their homes safe from fear, and no rod of God's displeasure or retribution falls upon them? One such case upsets your argument entirely; ye surely must know there are many such.

10. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.

11. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.

12. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.

13. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.

Their property being in flocks and herds, it was pertinent to say that in this business they escaped the losses and failures incident to stock-raising. Their children also were multiplied like their flocks; all healthy, moreover, and happy. Their days they spend in prosperity to the end, and then, with no pangs in their death and no wasting sickness, they drop in a moment into their graves. What better earthly estate does man ever know than theirs?

14. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

15. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?

"And" (the Heb. does not authorize the word "Therefore," as in our English)—they are so emboldened by their unbroken prosperity that they become defiant of God and contemptuously repel all knowledge of his ways and all his claims upon them for service, homage, or gratitude.—The last verb in v. 15, "*pray*," suggests (in the original) a prayer which *assails* the Lord with petitions; is importunate and persistent. What would be the profit to us (say they) of even the most importunate prayers? *i. e.*, they imply—We get all the good we care for without laborious praying.

16. Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

In the first clause, the most obvious sense seems to be quite in conflict with the strain of the context. Three other constructions may be suggested between which the choice may lie.—(*a*) That of Conant:—"Their good"—*i. e.*, their *real* good, in the true and highest sense, is not in their possession, or within their grasp. Sentiment: Though the wicked may have only prosperity, yet impiety is folly, and godliness the only true wisdom.—The objection to this construction is that Job (v. 13) had used this same

word *good* (Eng. "wealth") saying—They spend—wear out—all their days in *good*. How then should he so suddenly change the sense of this word with no intimation of the change?—(b) I suggest whether it is admissible to use the words "In their hand" as in the phrase—To "take one's life in his hand" (Judg. 12: 3 and 1 Sam. 18: 5 and 28: 20. Job 13: 14 and Ps. 119: 109) *i. e.*, to imply what is specially *precarious*, exposed to imminent danger of loss. Lo, ye see their prosperity is *not* precarious—but is stable.—Or (c) it may be taken ironically: Ye say their good is not in their hand: What could be more so? If *they* have not prosperity ever in their hand, who on the earth has?—To this construction I see no serious objection.—But adds Job, great and stable as their prosperity may be, I have no sympathy with their counsels; I abhor their principles; I will have none of their ways! These are the utterances of a pious heart.

17. How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and *how oft* cometh their destruction upon them! *God* distributeth sorrows in his anger.

18. They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away.

The meaning of the clause—"How oft," etc., depends, we may say, entirely upon the emphasis and the punctuation at its close—whether an interrogation, or an exclamation. If we read—*How oft* is the candle of the wicked put out! we imply that it is indeed very often. If we read—*How* often is their candle put out? we ask the reader to consider how many cases he can recall, and we imply that he will not find many such.—Now here it is plain that the latter mode of reading gives the real thought of Job. He did not see many such cases. There might be some; but they could easily be counted. Thousands of wicked men, however, lived and died with no such experience. His friends had affirmed that this was the universal experience of wicked men. Job says, No! by no means. *How* often does even one solitary case appear? Moreover it is vital to the true sense of this whole passage (v. 17-19) that its punctuation should be made to accord with Job's real meaning in his argument—thus: *How* often is the candle of the wicked put out and their destruction comes upon them (as ye say), and *how oft* does He in his anger distribute sorrows [among them]? *How* oft are they as stubble before the wind and as chaff which the wind drives away? Ye have made sweeping declarations affirming these visitations of calamity upon the wicked to be universal; but do not those statements need to be greatly qualified—nay more—limited within narrow bounds?

19. God layeth up his iniquity for his children; he rewardeth him, and he shall know *it*.

20. His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

21. For what pleasure *hath* he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?

Here too the punctuation is vital to the real sense,—thus: Will God treasure up his iniquity for his sons—*i. e.*, to reap the fruit thereof? On him (the wicked man himself) let God requite it, that *he* may know! If God would have his providential judgments understood without mistake, let him visit them upon the sinner himself, and not lay them up in store for his children!—So also v. 20: “Let his eyes see his own destruction, and let him” (the sinner who commits the sin) “drink of the wrath of the Almighty!” And v. 21—“For what of pleasure (or pain either) hath he in his house (family) after him”—(after himself is dead)—“and the number of his months is cut off”? This is a very indefinite and uncertain way (Job argues) for God to manifest retribution for sin in this world.

22. Shall *any* teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high.

Would ye assume to dictate to God a better way than his own to manage the wicked in this world? Ye are perpetually assuming that, being just, he ought to administer his government with perfect and finished justice here in time; but, in fact, every body must see that he does not. Are ye not then assuming that ye can teach him how he ought to punish sin in this world? Will ye thus essay to teach God a higher and better knowledge than his own, when it is *He* who judges all the high—the loftiest beings in the heavens above or in the earth beneath?

23. One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet.

24. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.

25. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.

26. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.

There is a diversity amounting to contrast in the fortunes of men under the government of the same God—a diversity which we are entirely unable to explain on the principle of a present and perfect retribution for their respective sins. One dies in the very essence, fullness, of his perfection (Heb.)—every thing about him at the highest point of prosperity: Another dieth in the extremest soul-bitterness, having never tasted real good. Alike they lie down in the grave, and ye can not see in their life and in their death any reason for this wide diversity in the ways of God toward them.*

* The first Heb. word in v. 24 (Eng. “breasts”) occurs only here. Its precise meaning, therefore, is doubtful. Some authorities give it—A *place* where flocks lie down, which is full of their milk:

27. Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices *which* ye wrongfully imagine against me.

28. For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where *are* the dwelling places of the wicked?

“Behold” calls attention to a new point in his speech.—I know your artful wresting of the doctrine of God’s providence to make it bear with crushing force upon your old but now afflicted friend. Ye are saying—Where is the house of him who lived as a prince among his people?—Where in all the ages is the dwelling place of the wicked? Suddenly swept away before the tornadoes of divine wrath—as thine, O Job, has been!—So I understand Job to imply that his friends were tacitly bringing their logic to bear upon himself and to cut deep into his acute sensibilities by the insinuation that Job’s case came under the general law—the desolations of God’s judgments always coming down upon the wicked.

29. Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens,

30. That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.

31. Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him *what* he hath done?

Job’s friends had made their appeal to the ancients (8: 8-10 and 15: 10, 18, 19), and to men of extensive travel, and consequently, of great knowledge of God’s ways toward men. Here Job makes a similar appeal. Have ye not asked the wayfaring men, and do ye not understand their signs—the indications they have given of their opinions, viz., that the wicked—far from being punished (as they deserved) at the time and on the spot, are held over, reserved to some future day of destruction, borne on forward to the day of wrath!—Further, (v. 31), Who faces them down by charging and proving their sin upon them, and bringing them to condign punishment? No one. In the great majority of cases this is never done in this world. Wicked men are not requited here for their sins.

32. Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb.

33. The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him, and every man shall draw after him, as *there are* innumerable before him.

34. How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?

Others better:—His *loins*, sides, full of fat (Gesenius); but Fuerst—His sinews, reins, full of juice. The sense of the passage in whole is scarcely affected by these diverse senses of this word.

We must begin v. 32, not with "*Yet*," which is not indicated at all in Hebrew, and damages the real connection of thought; but rather with "*And*"—a new fact, following naturally upon the next preceding.—He escapes retribution here in time—*And he* (slightly emphatic) *he*, this wicked, unpunished man, is borne away to his grave; and they watch over his tomb—(survivors guard his tomb from desecration, even as they have buried him with honor). The clods of the valley are as sweet to him as to any other people; men follow after him in long procession at his burial, or perhaps the sense is, "draw after him" in emulation of his great prosperity—as also men without number followed the same path before him. Nothing in the general administration of God over the wicked gives such warning against prosperous wickedness as deters men from pursuing the same path age after age.

How vain, therefore are all your consolations—the things ye perpetually suggest and reiterate—seeing that in your replies [arguments] there is only deception, fallacy, and really no truth, no harmony at all with the actual facts of human history!



CHAPTER XXII.

Last speech of Eliphaz.

After expressing his views on the question whether man's piety can bring to God either profit or pleasure (v. 2, 3), Eliphaz proceeds to charge Job, not by implication only, as heretofore, but directly and explicitly, with overt crime (v. 4-9); suggests that this has been the cause of his great calamities (v. 10, 11); intimates that Job must have thought God could not see him (v. 12-14); asks him if he still persists in the sinful ways and defiant spirit of the generation buried beneath the flood (v. 15-18); tells how the righteous rejoice in the retributions sent of God upon the wicked (v. 19, 20); advises Job to acquaint himself with God, promising, upon this, great peace and prosperity (v. 21-29); and power with God in prayer, to save even the guilty (v. 30).

1. Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,
2. Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?
3. *Is it* any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or *is it* gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?

"Can a man profit God? for it is himself the wise man profits. The Hebrew has nothing which suggests the comparison which appears in our English version—"as a wise man profits himself." Eliphaz means only this—that no man profits God; his piety

profits himself only. God is too great and high, too independent of his creatures, to be benefited by their piety or by any service they can render. So also it is no pleasure to him that his creatures should be righteous—no gain though they be perfect.—The bearing of these views upon the case in hand is not entirely obvious. Perhaps Eliphaz would imply that Job must think he was laying God under obligation to him by his great piety. Truly, the idea of conferring favors upon God is at once repulsive, mistaken and pernicious; but on the other hand, we must say that Eliphaz presents a cold, repulsive view of God's feelings toward his creatures. What! is he a Great Father, and yet has he no joy in his heart over the sincere love, reverence, faith, obedience, of his children? Has he neither interest nor pleasure in their piety and happiness? If such were the doctrine of Eliphaz, we must ascribe it to the darkness of his age, and can only wish he had better known the love for our lost race that shines forth in the glorious gospel.

4. Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment?

5. *Is* not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?

In v. 4 the Heb. word for "fear" may mean either dread, being afraid; or piety, *i. e.*, the true *fear of God*. The latter sense is very frequent in the Old Testament, and applies most appropriately here. Eliphaz does not ask whether God will reprove Job because he is afraid of him; for this would be very weak and insipid; but rather asks whether God is rebuking him—entering into judgment with him—*because of his piety*. What! (Eliphaz would say) can you be so void of sense as to assume that your great piety has brought down upon you these inflictions from God's hand? Do you not know that when God sends on you his sore judgments it must be for your great sins?—This, we must remember, is the staple doctrine of Eliphaz—one that no point made in his speeches might ever forget.—It is in this line of thought that he advances to say next—"Is not thy wickedness great? and there is no end to thine iniquities." This Eliphaz perpetually assumes, yet more boldly in this speech than in either of the two preceding—a fact which naturally comes of heated personal controversy. He would say to Job—It is very absurd for you to assume that God is scourging and crushing you for your piety, when it so manifestly must be for your great sin.

6. For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.

7. Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.

8. But *as for* the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honorable man dwelt in it.

9. Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.

Here Eliphaz, no longer content with the vague and general inference that Job must be a great sinner, though no mortal can see wherein,—advances to specific charges, and declares him guilty of sins toward his fellow men of the sort which, in oriental society, were deemed most heinous and disgraceful. It is plain that on his part these were purely gratuitous assumptions for which he had not the first particle of proof. All he knew as to Job's sin in these points or any other was his own false theological inference from Job's great sufferings.—According to the Mosaic law, which in these points seems to have been fully in harmony with oriental ideas, to take a pledge for no consideration, to which he who takes it has no just claim, was deemed a mean and wicked outrage on the poor man's rights. To take the poor man's garment, which not only covered his nakedness by day but wrapped and protected him from the chills of night, was specially oppressive and outrageous. So also, to withhold bread and water from the suffering was a violation of the most sacred rights of hospitality—nowhere more sacred than in the oriental world. And yet farther, to give the land to the mighty and the honorable, while he sent widows away empty and crushed the orphan, was a crime to be held in detestation.

10. Therefore snares *are* round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee;

11. Or darkness, *that* thou canst not see; and abundance of waters cover thee.

These great sins would account for the great calamities which had fallen upon Job; nothing else could. Snares hemming in his way; the horrible fear and dread of which he had often complained; darkness through which he could see no light; floods of desolation overwhelming;—all these came of his unprecedented crimes.

12. *Is* not God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are!

13. And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?

14. Thick clouds *are* a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.

We may well take v. 12 as the speaker's own view of God's lofty position, whence he can survey all the things of earth and especially all the *sins* of men;—and then commence v. 13—"Yet," notwithstanding this, thou (Job) must have been saying in thine heart—How doth God know? Can his eye pierce the dark eloud and, through its darkness, see all the deeds of men? Thick clouds are the covering of his tent. He occupies himself with walking to and fro upon the high vault of heaven, and little does he see or know what man is doing so far beneath!—These are the views which Eliphaz assumes that Job must have had—else he could not have given himself up to such outrageous wickedness.

15. Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden?

16. Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood:

17. Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?

18. Yet he filled their houses with good *things*; but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

Our English version assumes that Eliphaz calls Job's attention to the facts of the deluge;—"Hast thou *marked*"—noticed—those events? But the Hebrew word should rather have the sense—Wilt thou *keep on* in that old way? Wilt thou maintain it, persist in it, hold it fast? Wilt thou live over again their deeds and their spirit?—In the same sense, David uses this verb (Ps. 18: 22 or 2 Sam. 22: 22); "For I have *kept* the way of the Lord."—It will be noticed that under this construction, Eliphaz is far more severe upon Job than under the former:—for while it is very mild to ask Job if he had taken note of that terrible judgment, it is heartless insult and abuse to ask him if he purposes to *keep on* in their course—assuming that he has been pursuing it with all its bold defiance of the Almighty and contemptuous rejection of his claims.—In v. 16, the sense of the Hebrew verb for "*cut down*," occurring here only, must be determined from the cognate languages. In them, the sense—*seized, arrested, taken firm hold of*, is by far best sustained. The meaning of the verse therefore is—God seized hold of them to arrest their daring wickedness.—Moreover, the Hebrew is not—"out of time"—in the sense—out of this world of time; but literally this—and [it was] *not time*—was not according to the usual manner of God *as to time*—this manner being to give wicked men a long protracted space for repentance. Not so, but with what we are wont to call an *untimely* arrest—a seizing of them which was *out of time*. Compare Eccl. 7: 17 where we have the same words with only the addition "thy": "Why shouldest thou die before thy time"?—"Upon whose foundation was poured out a great river or flood"?—Who *were saying* unto God—the present participle [Heb.] denoting the present tense more definitely than any other form of the verb. The speaker implies that they were *then* saying this: that while these words were in their mouths the terrible judgment fell on them. Our Lord gives the same view (Luke 17: 26, 27): "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage *until the day* that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all."—"What can the Almighty do *for them*," *i. e.*, for Noah and his family? The old patriarch (they would say) has a notion that a great flood is coming and that if he trusts in his God and follows his direction as to preparing an ark, God will carry him safely through—which in

their eyes doubtless seemed quite absurd and perhaps ridiculous. Hence "What can the Almighty do for them"? well expressed their feelings.—It made their sin inexpressibly vile and mean that God had long been filling their houses with good. They had waxed fat upon his bounties and had grown proud, hardened, and lost to all gratitude.—At this point Eliphaz interposes the same words which Job had used (21 : 16) and in the same sense : I too as truly as yourself abhor the counsels of the wicked ; I detest their spirit ; my soul recoils from their counsels, and shudders in view of their doom ! Eliphaz would no doubt imply and probably he meant—I can say this much more truthfully than you.

19. The righteous see *it*, and are glad : and the innocent laugh them to scorn.

20. Whereas our substance is not cut down, but the remnant of them the fire consumeth.

The righteous see these judgments on the wicked, and rejoice. The innocent retaliate the scorn which the ungodly had previously heaped on them.—The common version of v. 20 is quite unmeaning in this connection. It also fails to give the sense of the Hebrew words. Better thus : "Most assuredly our adversary is cut down" [made to despair], "and what remains of them, fire consumes." This is what the righteous say of their wicked haters and persecutors.—The strong affirmation in the first words of the verse is made by a peculiar Hebrew idiom;—"If not"—*i. e.*, if this be not true, nothing is true. V. 20 carries on and fills out the thought in v. 19.

21. Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace : thereby good shall come unto thee.

22. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.

In itself this advice is most excellent ; but as said to Job, implying that he had never made the acquaintance of God—had never either taken God's law to his heart, or obeyed it in spirit—was a grievous violation of Christian charity and most unreasonably severe. Considered as said to men who had never known God, no counsel could be better. To know God, with knowledge amounting to real acquaintance, and then to take the law of one's own life from his lips and treasure his words in the heart, is indeed man's supreme wisdom. No words can overstate the blessedness of such relationship to the Infinite Father.

23. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put iniquity far from thy tabernacles.

24. Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the *gold* of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.

25. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defense, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.

This passage, exceedingly beautiful when rightly understood, needs to have its translation improved in two important respects. (a) The first clause of v. 24 should read—not “lay up gold as dust”—but “*cast forth gold upon the dust*”—throw it away upon the ground; and “Ophir” *—*i. e.*, its gold—cast thou to the stones of the brook. This is unquestionably the sense of the Hebrew words, for the verb signifies to lay or cast *down*—not to lay up as a safe deposit. The next words mean—*upon the dust or ground*—not *as*, which this preposition never signifies.—Then in v. 25, we have the same word for “gold” as in v. 24; but here, unaccountably, our translators rendered it, not *gold* but “defense.” We must correct this, and read verse 25: “For the Almighty will be thy gold, and silver for thee”—of which the Hebrew says—not “plenty,” but that for which men toil severely; the silver for which men labor so hard, thy God will himself be to thee.—(b) The second change to be made in the translation of this passage is to continue the condition (*i. e.*, the power of the word “*if*”)—throughout vs. 23 and 24 thus:—“*If* thou return to the Almighty; and *if* thou put iniquity far away from thy heart; and *if* thou shalt cast gold away upon the ground, and Ophir [its gold] to the stones of the brook;—then the Almighty will be thy gold, and will be silver to thee”—the silver for which men toil severely.—This it will be seen makes Eliphaz talk more sensibly than our English version does as to hoarding gold and silver. How much better to have God our chief possession—our supreme treasure—than the gold of Ophir!

26. For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.

27. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows.

These conditions being fulfilled, thou *shalt delight thyself* (reciprocal verb) in the Almighty; shalt lift up thy face, not proudly but in peaceful trust, toward (or unto) God. Acceptable prayer will be one of thy chief blessings—above all price to frail mortals.—To “perform one’s vows” implied that the blessing sought, to which the vow stood related, had been found. So the Psalmist: “I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered and my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble” (Ps. 66: 13, 14).

28. Thou shalt also decree a thing; and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways.

29. When *men* are cast down, then thou shalt say, *There* is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person.

* The name “Ophir” became so associated with gold that the geographical name itself is used for gold. Compare Job 28: 16 and 1 Kings 9: 28 and 10: 15, 22 and 1 Chron. 29: 4 and Ps. 45: 9 and Isa. 13: 12.

"Shalt decree a thing"—in modern phrase—purpose or decide to do a thing. The verb suggests that the man *cuts off* further inquiry and debate, as the English word *decide* also signifies.—"And light shall shine"—better than "*the light*," for no particular light is thought of.

V. 29 presents rather special difficulties. Critics suggest various constructions. The verb for "*are cast down*," has no subject expressed, "*men*" not being in the Hebrew at all. Some construe the passage—When thy ways ("ways" being brought forward from the previous verse) are depressed, thou shalt say—"exaltation" [soon]. In a spirit hopeful and trustful, thou wilt look for speedy uplifting again, for God will save those of *humble look*, as opposed to men of proud look.—Others—When proud and violent men (none others would do it) crush thee down and thou sayest—Oh, the insolence! then God will save the humble, and thee also, since thou art such.—The chief objection to this is that it takes too much upon supposition which is not definitely indicated in the words of the passage.—Others say—When men humble themselves, thou dost command exaltation, for God saves, etc. But this as said by Eliphaz to Job, assumes Job to be again in power, wielding extensive influence—a very improbable supposition for this speech. The first named construction seems open to fewer objections than any other.

30. He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thy hands.

The sense "*island*" is entirely foreign from the scope of thought, and is not by any means demanded by the original. The word is manifestly a negative. Prefixed to an adjective, as here to the word "*innocent*," it means—the *not* innocent—*i. e.*, the guilty. Though of rare occurrence in Hebrew, the authority of cognate languages and of later Rabbinic usage seems quite sufficient to establish this sense.—Upon this construction, the sense is easy and plain: Thy pure hands, uplifted in prayer, shall avail to save the *not-innocent*—*i. e.*, the guilty. "Lifting up holy hands," thy prayer for even bad men shall be heard before God.

These are the last recorded words of Eliphaz.—In point of literary merit this last speech is well enough; its logic is not bad if only its premises were true and worthily assumed; but its spirit, its moral tone, is bad; its assumptions as to Job were unauthorized and cruel. We need not wonder that in the final result the Lord rebuked him as well as his associates, and humbled them to ask their much-abused friend to go to God in prayer on their behalf.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Job's Reply to the last Speech of Eliphaz.

Deeply pained by the severe implications of his professed friends, Job replies that his complaints are not duly appreciated; that his sufferings surpass his groans (v. 2); O might he but carry his case up from man's hearing to God's! (v. 3, 4). He knows that God would give him a more kind hearing (v. 5, 6), and a more righteous decision (v. 7); but alas! turn which way he may, he finds him not (v. 8, 9); yet God surely knows all his life-path (v. 10); and that he has held fast to the word and to the prescribed law of his God (v. 11, 12); but God is changeless and does all his pleasure (v. 13, 14): therefore Job is the more afraid and troubled (v. 15-17).

1. Then Job answered and said,

2. Even to-day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning.

The precise sense of the word rendered "bitter"* is given variously by the best authorities. Conant—"frowardness"—i. e., my complaint is so regarded by my opponents: Fuerst says—"harshness, violence"—meaning—This is what I complain of: while Gesenius favors the sense "outcry"—my complaint is an outcry against abuse and wrong. The sense given by Conant seems to me most in harmony with Job's probable feelings. My complaint is deemed utterly unreasonable, a sin and a shame—which would be a reproach very hard for such a sufferer to bear.—To this in self-justification Job replies:—"My stroke" (that which falls upon me) "is heavier than my groaning."—For the word "stroke," the Hebrew has its usual word for *hand*,† but certainly in the sense—the hand that smites or falls upon me. My complaint is far below the severity of these inflictions. So far from complaining to excess, my sufferings are far in excess of my groans.

3. Oh that I knew where I might find him! *that* I might come *even* to his seat!

4. I would order *my* cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

5. I would know the words *which* he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.

6. Will he plead against me with *his* great power? No; but he would put *strength* in me.

No special emphasis should be laid on the word "*where*" as to

the *place* in which God might be found. Conant translates "*how* I might" etc., but the Hebrew says only this:—"O that I knew and that I might find"—*i. e.*, that I knew enough as to both the place where and the manner how, that I might successfully seek and really find.—The original favors the dependence of all the clauses to the end of v. 6 upon this outcry of strong desire—"O that!" Thus—O that I knew and might find him; O that I might come even to his seat—that I might lay out my case in order before him and might fill my mouth with arguments! O that I might know the words he would answer me, and understand what he would say to me!—Then (v. 6)—With his great power would he plead with me? No! he surely would give heed to me, or more literally—set [his thought] upon me. The usage of this verb in Job 4: 20, without an object after it, but certainly implying the sense—mind or thought—justifies this construction here. In that passage—"They perish forever without any regarding it" we have only the same verb as here—without any one putting or setting—and must supply—*his mind*, to it. So here: No; God would give his mind and thought to my prayer. This was Job's confidence and consolation.

7. There the righteous might dispute with him: so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.

"Dispute," not in the bad sense, implying boldness, much less impudence or dogmatism; but only to *reason with him*. The Heb. word in this book is commonly translated—to *reason with*.—The last clause raises the question—From what "judge"? The Almighty and Supreme; or these human self appointed judges whose judgment of his case had borne upon him with such savage severity? The latter unquestionably. If he could get a hearing before the Most High, he would care little for what Eliphaz or Bildad or Zophar might think or say of his case.

8. Behold, I go forward, but he *is not there*; and backward, but I can not perceive him;

9. On the left hand, where he doth work, but I can not behold *him*: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I can not see *him*:

10. But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

Returning to speak again of his search after God, he says—I go in every direction—toward every point of the compass, but find him not: forward—*i. e.*, toward the East, then backward, to the West; then on the left hand, *i. e.*, to the North where men see most grand and brilliant displays of his glory in the aurora borealis and in the great constellations of the heavens; then to the South where in its dark chambers he doth hide himself—that quarter of the heavens being little seen or known—but all this search is vain.—This description suggests by contrast that of

the Psalmist (139: 7-12)—“If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in Hades, lo, Thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me.” But alas! nowhere in the universe does Job find that sensible presence of God which his aching heart longs for. Yet, he adds, God knoweth the way I take—knoweth all the life I live and all my griefs and woes. When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold from the furnace. This is one of those utterances of his heart-confidence which no severity of trial, no racking torture of reproach from friends; none of those perplexities which sometimes drive him almost to despair, could utterly expel from his soul. Apparently such expressions of deep and precious trust in God were more free and full after that glorious triumph of his faith which we saw in the close of chap. 19;—“I know that my Redeemer liveth.”

11. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

12. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary *food*.

Here Job expresses his deep consciousness of integrity toward God in an honest, sincere purpose of obedience. All along in his debate with his friends he had maintained this, and had felt it deep in his soul, to his great consolation.—In the last clause of v. 12, the word “food” which the translators supplied without Heb. authority, is not the right one. The Hebrew * is constantly used in the sense of what is *enjoined*, imposed or ordained as law, precept. Hence the better sense is—I have treasured up the words of his mouth more than my own law or purpose. Above the demands of my own will, I have kept and prized the will of my God. *His will above mine* has been the law of my life.—Glorious testimony to the right and the only right attitude of the human will to the divine!

13. But he *is* in one *mind*, and who can turn him? and *what* his soul desireth, even *that* he doeth.

14. For he performeth *the thing that* is appointed for me: and many such *things* are with him.

The immutability of God is the thought here, coupled with the certain accomplishment of all He wills to do.—The practical bearing of this doctrine concerning God upon the then present condition and hopes of Job seems to have been discouraging—as we shall see.

15. Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.

*פֶּן

16. For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me :

17. Because I was not cut off before the darkness, *neither* hath he covered the darkness from my face.

"Therefore"—*i. e.*, because God is so changeless in his purposes and will so surely accomplish them all—therefore am I troubled. For, as to his ways with me, I must judge of the future from the past. How can I hope to work any change in his purposes or in his course of dealing with me?—"God maketh my heart soft"—weak, powerless—not *tender* in the moral sense of being penitently submissive, but void of firmness and endurance—hopeful courage and faith failing me.—V. 17 has difficulties. The English version quite fails to give the sense of the Hebrew. Better thus: "For I have not been cut off—*i. e.*, broken down in heart and hope—*before mere darkness*—these external calamities; nor because he hath spread darkness over my face. A deeper reason than this for the prostration of my spirit and hopes is at the root—*viz.*, the apparent wrath of God against me.



CHAPTER XXIV.

Job concludes his speech.

This chapter has great unity of argument throughout. It makes but one main point, *viz.*, to show that there are oppressors—outrageously wicked men in the world who live to the usual limit of human life in prosperity, and meet no such fearful judgments from the Almighty as they deserve, nor such as on your theory (he would say to his opponents) they ought to have. The whole chapter is devoted to the description of these wicked men and of the poor victims of their oppression. The chief difficulty for the reader to overcome is to distinguish the descriptive points which apply to the oppressor from those which describe his oppressed victim.

1. Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?

This somewhat obscure verse gives the key to the entire chapter, and should therefore be carefully considered.—"Times" and "days" must here be essentially synonymous—both indicating special periods of God's visitations of retributive judgments upon the wicked for their sins. The scriptural usage of these words may be readily seen: that of the word "*time*" in Isa. 13: 22, "Her *time* is near to come and her days shall not be prolonged:" Jer. 27: 7, "Until the very *time* of his land come:" Ezek. 22: 3,

"The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it that her *time* may come:"—Ezek. 30: 3, "For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near: it shall be the *time* of the heathen."—For the word "*day*" see Isa. 13: 6, "The *day* of Jehovah is at hand; it shall be as a destruction from the Almighty:" Isa. 2: 12, "For the *day* of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud," etc.; Joel 2: 1, "Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the *day* of the Lord cometh": Zeph. 1: 7, "Hold thy peace, for the *day* of the Lord is at hand," etc.; Zech. 14: 1, etc.

But what can be meant by these *times* being "hidden from the Almighty?" It is simply inept and insupposable that God's own times should be unknown to himself or concealed from himself. —Moreover, the argument as put in our English version is too weak to bear any weight. If God knows his own times, then they that know Him ought to see them also. Can we infer that his creatures must know all that he knows? We must look deeper into this passage, for there must be in it some better logic.—I suggest this: If there is no concealment on the part of God as to his times of retribution on the wicked—if He makes no effort to conceal, but on the contrary, makes these times of retribution open and palpable, then why should not those who know him discern these days—these times of retribution? This is sensible reasoning and wholly in accord with facts. It also meets the requirements of the Hebrew words.—The force of the first word—*Why?* bears upon the last clause;—Why do not God's knowing ones—(those who know him)—see his days of judgment, there being no concealment on his part as to these "times"? Inasmuch as nothing emanating from the Almighty serves to conceal but every thing to disclose, why shall not all who know God, in any just sense, see these open doings of God toward the wicked? The original I understand to signify, *not* that the knowledge of his own time is not concealed from the Almighty, but that no concealment of his times proceeds from him. He takes no pains, makes no effort, to conceal or hide them.

2. *Some* remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed *thereof*.

3. They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.

Here Job begins his description of notoriously wicked men.—To remove landmarks was bold iniquity which no right-thinking men could ever justify. See the Mosaic law on this point, Deut. 27: 17 and 19: 14 and Prov. 22: 28 and 23: 10 and Hos. 5: 10. —This law must have had special application in Egypt, where land was so valuable and the boundaries between one man's land and another's were fixed, not at all by fences, but only by landmarks. Hence the crime was the greater because more easily committed and with more difficulty detected. It became more vital to society to maintain the sacredness of the law.—They seize the cattle

[Heb.] of other men and feed them *as their own*—not as the English version might be understood to mean—and also their fodder. This crime also was committed with comparative ease, and therefore the greater odium attached to it, and the sacredness of the law became more vital to the well-being of society.—The crime is still more enhanced in malignity when perpetrated upon orphans and widows—less able to bear the loss and having less power of prevention or redress.

4. They turn the needy out of the way; the poor of the earth hide themselves together.

5. Behold, *as* wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness *yieldeth* food for them *and* for *their* children.

6. They reap *every one* his corn in the field: and they gather the vintage of the wicked.

7. They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that *they have* no covering in the cold.

8. They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter.

The sense of the words—"Turn the needy out of the way," *i. e.*, out of *their* way where it is their right to walk—may be seen in Amos 2: 7 and 5: 12; Isa. 29: 21 and Prov. 18: 5, etc., etc.—All the oppressed of the land are made to hide themselves—not necessarily "*together*" as the English version would suggest, but the speaker means that this is their common experience—a universal thing. To escape these giant oppressors, all the poor are compelled to hide themselves.

The reader should notice carefully that vs. 4–12 (with the exception of v. 9) are occupied in describing, not the oppressor directly, but those whom he oppresses. Job tells us how the violence of their oppressors compelled them to live.—In v. 5, these poor people, driven off into desert regions, are compared to wild asses—alike in roaming the desert and searching after food for themselves and their children.—In v. 6 they are supposed to be employed in labor for their oppressors, reaping his fodder, gleaning his vineyard. Naked, they pass the night without clothing, too poor to be comfortably clad. The outer garment for the day was the usual covering for the chilly night—most needed then. No protection against the mountain showers—the storms that came chilly and cold from the mountain regions. "Embracing the rock for a shelter," indicates that they had no protection save to nestle close to the rock which might sometimes break the force of the wind, or screen from the pelting storm.

9. They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor.

This verse, interposed here somewhat aside from the general drift of the connection, manifestly describes what is done by the oppressors. They tear orphan babes from the breast and take the pledge from the poor—the first step toward grasping and holding his last comfort.

10. They cause *him* to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf *from* the hungry;

11. *Which* make oil within their walls, *and* tread their wine-presses, and suffer thirst.

The course of these verses throughout is more easy if taken as describing directly the labors and privations of the oppressed rather than the doings of their oppressors—thus:—They walk about naked without covering; they bear sheaves [of corn] yet are hungry (not being allowed to relieve their hunger from the sheaves they bear); they make oil within their walls and tread the wine-press, yet suffer thirst—this being the aggravation of their suffering, that in the midst of plenty, wine flowing forth from under their feet, they are not permitted to taste; bearing corn-sheaves they must not eat—all in violation of that humane law: “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn” (Deut. 25: 4).

12. Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly *to them*.

Accepting the text as it stands and the words in their usual sense, the verse suddenly transfers the scene of the oppressor's devastations from country to city; and we may translate:—From out the city men groan and the soul of the wounded cries out aloud; but God [apparently] gives no heed to the wickedness. —The last verb is often used in this Book of Job with the noun for *heart* or *thought* to be supplied after it, the cases being sufficiently numerous to establish a settled usage. See 23: 6 and 24: 23 and 37: 15.—In this view of the verse it will be observed that the fact referred to is in full harmony with the drift of Job's argument, showing that in the present world God does often suffer outrageous crime to pass on unpunished.

The verb signifying to *put, place*, we have had repeatedly with *mind* understood, in the sense—putting his mind upon it; giving heed to it. The sentiment here is that God seems not to hear these outcries of helpless men, dying under the violence of their oppressors. This fact not only makes strongly against, but utterly disproves, the doctrine of an immediate and perfect retribution upon outrageous wickedness in the present world.

13. They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.

14. The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.

15. The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth *his* face.

16. In the dark they dig through houses, *which* they had marked for themselves in the day-time: they know not the light.

17. For the morning *is* to them even as the shadow of death: if *one* know *them*, *they are in* the terrors of the shadow of death.

Here is the oppressor himself—a murderer, a highway robber, a burglar, or an adulterer—every-where loving darkness and hating light—hating it as unendurable—the light of morning being to him more dreadful than the terrors of the shadow of death.—“They dig through houses”—conceives of the houses as mud-cabins, built of earth.—In v. 14, “rising with the light,” means at the earliest dawn.—The points of this description are too clear to need explanation.

18. He *is* swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.

In Hebrew—“light is he” (a light thing) like the papyrus skiffs on the Nile—on the face of the waters—descriptive of rapid motion, a quality essential to success in the crimes here referred to.—“Accursed is their portion in the earth”—only to be execrated are the men, their profession and their plunder. The original gives a very noticeable paranomasia between the first word of the verse translated “swift” and the verb in the second clause for “cursed.” No translation can reproduce this to purpose.—The last clause should read: “He turneth not to the way of vineyards” which I take to mean—He carefully avoids highly cultivated districts; finds his best success in regions remote from dense populations; he abhors civilization!

19. Drought and heat consume the snow waters: *so doth* the grave *those which* have sinned.

20. The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.

Dreaded of men are they—a curse to society. It is a comfort to say that as drought and heat drink up the waters that come from the hills of melting snow, so does the under-world, (Sheol) these desperate sinners.—Even the mothers that bear them are glad to forget them. Let the worms of the grave feed sweetly on them, for their flesh can turn to no better use. They have done nothing to entitle them to grateful remembrance among the living. Such wicked men are broken down like the tree which falls, never to rise again. Thus a sort of retribution follows them to their graves—as if glad to have its opportunity at last; but (Job plainly intimates) this retribution has been under restraint through

all their life. *In this world*, they never receive their just deserts. This is one of the main points of his argument.

21. He evil entreateth the barren *that* beareth not: and doeth not good to the widow.

22. He draweth also the mighty with his power; he riseth up, and no *man* is sure of life.

23. *Though* it be given him *to be* in safety, whereon he resteth; yet his eyes *are* upon their ways.

Again the speaker returns to his description of the wicked oppressor, touching briefly some salient points.

In v. 21 the first verb should be taken from a root not apparently noticed by the English translators, meaning—*he feedeth down*, in the sense of eating up, consuming, as in the figure—“They devour widows’ houses.” So these men eat up the barren woman who should be an object of commiseration.—In v. 22 I would say—not “draweth the mighty;” but taketh away, removeth them by his superior power.—In v. 23 the translation is not felicitous—the sense of the Hebrew being that this strong oppressor either displaces men by his superior power (as in v. 22) or he gives [Heb.] them to be in safety and then they are at rest—his eyes however narrowly watching their ways. That is, those whom at his sovereign option he deigns to spare, may live in peace under his perpetual surveillance.

24. They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all *other*, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.

The happiest exposition of this verse turns on its punctuation, the just arrangement of its distinct and dependent paragraphs—thus: “They rise high for a little while, and then—they *are not*! They are brought low; like all [the world] they are gathered and cut off like the top ears of corn. Brief is the pride of their power! Then you look for them and they are there no longer! As men cut off the highest ears of a cornfield—“*topping* them,” is the phrase—so they are cut down and gathered to their graves. This retribution comes in and after death; not before.

25. And if *it be* not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?

The conclusion—the grip of the whole argument—lies in this appeal. These are the facts of the world’s history. Disprove them, who can? If it be not so, who will prove me a liar, and my statements false and my words worthless? But if these things are true, then God’s retributions upon notoriously wicked men are *not completed* in this world. There *is* no such perfect retribution here as ye have persistently claimed.

CHAPTER XXV.

Last speech of Bildad.

This very short chapter brings the argument of Job's three friends to its final close. It is Bildad's third speech. Zophar does not resume the discussion, but rests his argument with his second speech (in chap. 20).—Bildad, it will be noticed, deals only in "glittering generalities," utterly failing to grapple with or even to notice the strong points just made by Job. Plainly as disputants they were routed from the field and had virtually thrown their weapons away in their flight. The points made by Bildad are indeed very true; but what are they to the great argument in hand? The conceptions are lofty; the rhythm mellifluous, and the doctrine taught as to God unobjectionable; but what are all these to the point in debate?—It should, however, be said that if Job had really claimed to be more righteous than God, or even equally pure as God, he would have deserved any severity of rebuke, and the argument here would, so far, have been in point.

1. Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
2. Dominion and fear *are* with him; he maketh peace in his high places.
3. Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom doth not his light arise?
4. How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean *that is* born of a woman?

"Dominion" pertains to him by infinite right; "reverence" toward him also is for evermore his due. His reign fills all heaven with blessedness! Ah indeed! Does not peace reign there in its fullness and glory forever?—"His armies"—troops or hosts—seem to refer to the heavenly bodies, the great luminaries of the sky which move in marshaled order like the battalions of a well disciplined army. Giving the words this sense, we see the natural connection of the next clause—"Upon whom doth not their light arise"? Think how brilliantly and gloriously they pour forth the very light of God over all the works of his hands!—In v. 4 the argument, tacitly implied, seems to be this:—that a God whose material light, thrown all abroad from the great orbs of heaven, is so pure and so magnificent, must be no less pure and glorious in his *moral qualities*—in holiness, equity and love; so that man, born of woman, should never assume to compare himself with God in moral purity, or even think to approach him in these respects, or in any wise be just before him.

5. Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.

6. How much less man, *that is* a worm? and the son of man, *which is* a worm?

Look even to the moon, the great orb of lesser brightness. Its shining is nothing compared with the glory of its Maker. The stars are not pure in his eyes—which seems to mean that their light is only as darkness in the presence of God's resplendent glory. Yet the discrimination between material and moral light seems not very distinctly drawn in the speaker's mind. Perhaps we must say Bildad tacitly assumes that the material light which strikes our bodily eye is a fit illustration and just measure of that purer, nobler light of moral purity and glory which dwells in the Most High. So considered, what is man before him—man who is only a worm—powerless, low, without dignity—nay even disgusting!—The Hebrew uses here two different words—both which our English translates by the one word, "worm." Both suggest insects which are always found in putrid, decomposing substances, so that both may alike refer to this destiny of the human body—food for corruption and worms.

As already suggested these thoughts are grand, impressive, just, and in this debate are in point to enforce due reverence toward the Infinite God—as to which Job's words and spirit had been sometimes very exceptionable and really deserved rebuke. But as bearing upon the great point—the question of God's moral administration over men in time—they would simply imply that it must be equitable and righteous on the great whole—to be shown in its own time—but do not by any means imply that this equity and righteousness are perfectly manifested here in this world. Hence the vital point of the great argument was evaded—not answered. The discussion had run its course and might as well close.



CHAPTER XXVI.

Job begins his final argument.

The field of argument is now cleared for Job to reply. He may descant upon the great theme under discussion and explain his position, fully as he might wish, in whatever point it might seem to have been imperfectly or erroneously apprehended.—This chapter is a definite reply to Bildad's last speech; first retorting with perhaps too much severity upon Bildad's talk as worse than powerless toward the result a true friend should have sought—viz., moral support and consolation to one under terrible affliction (v. 1-4); followed by a glowing description of the majesty, glory and grandeur of the works of God in the material universe.

Plainly Job is moved (inspired, shall we say ?) to this setting forth of God's majesty by the strain of Bildad's last speech—as if his underlying thought were:—I can appreciate these grand works of God as truly as yourself and might descant upon them no less eloquently. They have as much bearing in favor of my side of the main question as of yours. I shall allow you no monopoly in the use of such sublime descriptions!—Noticeably, Job does not intimate *how* in his view these lofty conceptions of God's works in the realm of the material-universe bore upon his doctrine as to God's moral administration; yet neither did his opponent. The logical purpose in both speeches is quite eclipsed by the rhetorical, and perhaps in a very general sense, the moral.

1. But Job answered and said,
2. How hast thou helped *him that is without power*? *how* savedst thou the arm *that hath* no strength?
3. How hast thou counselled *him that hath* no wisdom? and *how* hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?
4. To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee?

As intimated above, the rebuke involved in these questions has its main force in the very just assumption that a true friend (such as Bildad claimed to be and ought to have been) should make it his real object to "help" and "save," and really give good counsel to a friend, suffering as he saw Job to be. There was cutting truth therefore in Job's ironical reply—How tenderly and sweetly and most effectively hast thou helped and saved and counseled thy poor broken-down friend!—In Job's Hebrew words both beauty and force are heightened very much by a usage of the negative particle in a privative sense, signifying at least the utter absence of the quality spoken of, and, where the nature of the case admits, the presence of the opposite quality, thus:—How hast thou helped the *powerless*; saved the arm that is *nerveless*; given counsel to the *wisdomless*—(if we might coin a word)—*i. e.*, the *unwise* whose wisdom has sunk even into folly!—In the close of v. 3 the Heb. word translated—"*the thing as it is*," means simply *understanding*; parallel to "wisdom" in the first clause.—In v. 4, the question is not "*To whom*"? but *by whom*—by whose aid, by whose inspiration, as the next clause implies; by whose spirit breathed into thee, hast thou been so filled with superhuman wisdom as to utter these profound and wonderful words?

5. Dead *things* are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof.

6. Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.

The English version fails here also. Not "Dead things" but "The Shades"—the spirits of the departed, which are by no

means supposed to be void of life. The usage of this Heb. word is both definite and uniform, as may be seen in Ps. 88: 10;—Prov. 2: 18 and 9: 18 and 21: 16; Isa. 14: 9 and 26: 14, 19.—Moreover the verb means—not, “are formed”; but *tremble*. The passage rightly translated, gives its own meaning readily:—The Shades (souls of the departed) tremble beneath “the waters and their inhabitants”—where the ancients located the under-world—the home of departed souls. “Hell” (Heb. *Sheol*)—not the “Gehenna” of the New Testament—but the “Hades”—the place of location for the spiritual part of man after death. “Destruction” is here but another name for the same locality. The verse declares that this under-world is perfectly open to the view of God. So in Ps. 139: 8: “If I make my bed in hell (this same under-world), behold, thou art there.”

7. He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, *and* hangeth the earth upon nothing.

8. He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them.

“The North”—the northern region of the sky, the portion of that vast concave expanse above us whose starry constellations were visible to them in their northern hemisphere.—“Over the empty place”—Job using one of the two words of Moses in Gen. 1: 2, signifying what is *formless*, vacant as to distinctly visible objects; the great vacuity of empty space.—“He hangeth the earth upon nothing”—seems a long stride toward the true astronomical conception of the earth as “self-balanced, on its center hung”—unsupported by any thing underneath it, yet sustained by some unseen and to us mysterious agency of God.—V. 8 speaks of the water-bearing clouds as if the Great Creator had tied and bound the waters within them, making the clouds so tenacious and strong, that they can bear along their water-burden without being rent till they reach their destination.

9. He holdeth back the face of his throne, *and* spreadeth his cloud upon it.

“Holdeth back”—the sense however being better expressed by “*shutteth up*,” concealeth from the gaze of men, the face of his throne, no mortal eye being able to pierce through and distinctly behold it. God spreadeth his cloud over it. “Clouds and darkness are round about him.”

10. He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.

Literally;—“He hath described a circle upon the face of the waters, even to the end of light in the darkness”—*i. e.*, to the point or line where light terminates in darkness. The idea is not (as the common version seems to mean) to continue long as the succession of day and night does; but with reference to space—not to time—he has set bounds to the ocean waters far away as

to the utmost verge of light—to the point where light is limited by the outlying darkness—the oriental conception being that, outside the realms of light, darkness held sway.

11. The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof.

Here, the voice of God beneath which “the pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished” is thunder. This often seems to shake the very pillars of the lower heavens—“heavens” in the sense in which we read of “the clouds of heaven”—“the fowls of heaven.” What in all the realm of nature within the range of man’s senses is more majestic—what more impressively exhibits the glory of God, than the roll and the crash of thunder!

12. He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud.

The translation “divideth” misleads the reader, the sense being—He *subdues its raging*; calms it down to rest from its agitations. So the voice of the Son of God was heard over the tossing waves of the Galilean sea—“Peace; be still;—and there was a great calm.” Job thinks of the same divine power over the ocean waters; and from this, passes to the analogous power with which God in his wisdom smites down the pride of mortals.

13. By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.

The creative Spirit is thought of, as in Gen. 1 : 2 : “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”—“Garnished”—adorned, clothed with objects of beauty, viz., stars, planets and other heavenly bodies.*—The serpent thought of here is not he that crawls prone on the ground, but he who gives name to one of the grandest constellations in the heavens. The Hebrew qualifying word means rather *flying* than “crooked”—with reference to his place in the sky, *on the wing*, not prone upon the earth.—God alone is the glorious former of all these grandest objects visible to mortals.

14. Lo, these *are* parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?

“Parts of his ways” fails to give the full sense of the Hebrew which means the *borders* of his ways—those outlying manifestations which are most remote from his great central throne though nearest to us, it being implied that works and ways far more grand

*The original word is taken variously—either as a noun or as a verb in the Piel form—the sense being the same whether we read; “By his Spirit the heavens are brightness”; or, “The heavens are made bright,” i. e., splendid.

may lie nearer the center, around the ineffable, unapproachable throne of the Almighty!—The next clause is put in most expressive Hebrew words;—"And what a whisper of a word is heard of Him! But the thunder of his power, who can comprehend?" All we get of his ways with our dull ear is but the whisper of a word—the gentlest murmuring sound; but O, what are we, to know or to bear the awe-inspiring thunder of his power!

It can not be out of place to ask the reader to compare with this chapter of Job, some portions of the Song of Moses on the eastern shore of the Red Sea as in Ex. 15: 1-19, with an eye on the question of *authorship*. Are not both this chapter and that song from the same gifted poetic genius and the same reverent, adoring spirit?—Note these lines from the Red Sea song:—

"Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy! Thou didst blow with thy wind; the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters! Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like unto Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"—The salient points of resemblance between this song of Moses and the chapter before us are (a) High poetic genius:—(b) Most exalted conceptions of the divine power, majesty and glory;—*i. e.*, considered both intellectually and morally, these poems indicate and honor the same authorship.



CHAPTER XXVII.

Job continues.

This chapter has no obvious connection of thought with the one preceding. It is in two parts:—(a) A very solemn reassertion of his essential integrity, as against the reiterated charges of hypocrisy and great wickedness brought against him by his three friends (v. 1-6);—(b) The wicked man's portion in this life from God's providential hand.

This second part has given some critics great trouble because it has seemed to them so unlike Job's doctrine in chap. 24. They conclude that this can not be from the same Job. Hence some have held that this must be a third speech from Zophar, being in harmony with his known sentiments, but in their view, out of harmony with Job's. Besides, Zophar lacks yet one speech to make his number good—Eliphaz and Bildad having both spoken three times and Zophar but twice.—Against attributing this paragraph to Zophar may be urged—(a) that the text gives not the least hint of it—not the slightest intimation that these are words of Zophar, or any other man than Job:—and (b) There is nothing here out of character with Job's known sentiments—nothing out of harmony

with what he has previously said.—For be it carefully considered, Job has held that retribution on the wicked in this life is not perfect, is not complete; but he has never said, *there is none*; has never denied that retribution, more or less full, is the common law of human life. His opponents insisted most strenuously that this retribution is perfect here in time, always; manifestly; invariably; and they held this so strongly and with such sweeping application that they claimed to *know* absolutely that Job was the wickedest of men because he was the greatest known sufferer.—The one point of irreconcilable diversity therefore between Job and his three friends was precisely this—*The absolute and necessary perfection of God's retribution upon sinners in the present life*; they affirming; Job denying. Job could say as in chap. 24: There are many cases in which notoriously wicked men go through life unpunished; and to the point of his argument he might have said to his friends—A single case of this sort utterly overthrows your doctrine.—Job could also say (as in chap. 27); The very common lot of the wicked in this life is calamity, disappointment, retribution from the hand of God. There was ample room in his system of theology for this admission.

After Job's three friends had rested their case, having exhausted their logic upon him in vain, we may think of him in this final reply as quietly saying (perhaps in an under-tone)—Ye have sought to make capital for your argument by magniloquent discourse upon the majesty of God and the glory of his works—as in the last speech of Bildad (chap. 25). I would have you understand that ye have no monopoly of that theme; I can descant upon it in strains of poetry and eloquence in nowise inferior to yours.—Ye have also given large scope to your poetry and eloquence in your portrayals of the bitter lot of the wicked in this world under God's retributions. I have the same right to speak of this as yourselves; I have seen all that ye have seen and am quite able to expatiate upon it even as ye have done.—Moreover, ye claim to stand high aloof from all sympathy with the wicked man, prosper though he may for his brief day of life. I too (Job would say) can honestly deny all sympathy with the man of wickedness, how prosperous soever he may sometimes appear to be. The chapter before us expresses this sentiment.—It was exceedingly wise and fore-thoughtful in Job to bring out these points in his theological system in order to prevent misapprehension, to round out his system, and present it in its completeness. Those critics, therefore, who deny the authorship of Job in this chapter because of the doctrine it puts forth must have sounded his system with a very short line—unto only a very shallow depth.

1. Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,
2. As God liveth, *who* hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, *who* hath vexed my soul;
3. All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils;

4. My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

"Parable," not in the sense common in the New Testament—a supposed or actual case presented and more or less fully expanded for illustration—but in the broader sense—*discourse*—here in poetic form and including many supposed cases for illustration on the main theme of the chapter as presented in vs. 13-23.—"As God liveth"—was one form of the solemn oath, and indicates here the depth of Job's feeling and the solemnity of this utterance.—"Taken away my judgment"—on the most charitable and intrinsically most fair construction, should be taken to mean that, *on the system of divine government* so strenuously asserted by his friends, viz., blessing and suffering awarded to men in this life strictly according to their individual virtue or vice—God had taken away his righteousness; had dishonored and disowned it; had not recognized it as it was. If all his sufferings had been pure punishment and nothing else, then, comparing himself with the rest of mankind, he had been *overmuch punished*. He knew he had honestly sought, and labored to do, the known will of God. He saw hosts of men who had neither sought to know God's will nor to do it, yet *his* sufferings had been fearfully great, while *their* lot had been almost or altogether uniformly prosperous. So contemplated and so estimated, God had taken away from Job what would have been a just and equitable apportionment of good or ill on the basis of his moral goodness or perverseness.

This need not be construed to imply that Job arraigned the Almighty as having dealt with him unjustly. We are not really obliged to concede that Job claimed to be sinless before God, nor even that his sufferings were greater than he deserved. But this we must concede that, *according to the doctrine of God's government which was pressed on him so persistently by his friends*, his "right had been taken away;" he had been punished quite beyond his due proportion, compared with other men. So a man wrongfully charged with murder might assert his innocence most solemnly, even calling God to witness to his protestations, and yet he might not claim to be in all respects sinless. He might say—Ye ought to understand me as speaking only to that charge against me of murder.—Yet the vindication of Job which I here suggest is qualified, not absolute. He had said things of God and to God which should have been more guarded, more reverent. When ultimately he came to see God with nearer, clearer view, he abhorred himself and repented bitterly.—"Who hath vexed my soul"—in the sense of the Hebrew is—hath brought bitterness upon my soul—bitter, fearful agony.—V. 3 carries the mind back to Gen. 2: 7 for the conception of *life* as imparted to man by the breath or spirit of God, breathed into him. So long as I live—is the idea—this life being the immediate gift of God. So long I will speak truth and truth only—said with special reference to confessing himself wicked and guilty in the sense charged by his friends.

5. God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me.

6. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach *me* so long as I live.

Never will I admit the justice of your charges against me. I can not, will not, deny my essential integrity, as opposed to the hypocrisy and awful wickedness which ye impute to me. In this sense we are to understand Job as affirming his righteousness and refusing to retract this affirmation.—In the last clause of v. 6 our Eng. version comes short of the Hebrew, which means—my heart shall not reproach *any one* of my days.—In the phrase—“God forbid”—our translators allowed themselves to use the name of God where the original does not. It were better to follow the original and say only—“Be it far from me; be it an abomination to me! Never let it be!—The use of that sacred name for the sake of emphasis should be reverently avoided. The prayer, “Hallowed be thy name,” should rule out, as inadmissible, the translation—“God forbid.”

7. Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.

Though I have maintained (Job would say) that the wicked sometimes prosper through a long life, yet, let none suppose I envy his happiness or have any sympathy with his spirit or his life. Nay, verily. The worst wish I can have for my enemy is that he may have the doom of the wicked. I can think of nothing more dreadful—can ask for him no destiny more fearful.

From this point through the chapter Job descants upon the fearful lot of the wicked even in this world.

8. For what *is* the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?

9. Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?

Some word of broader significance than “hypocrite” would be better here, for the thought is not of one who pretends to be what he is not; but of the robber, despoiler, who has enriched himself by violence or fraud. What will his hope (*i. e.*, of enjoying his accumulations) amount to though he hath torn away their goods from others, when God shall similarly tear away his soul? Will God hear his cry in that dread hour?

10. Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?

Has this despoiler of others ever chosen God for his portion and his joy? Has it been his *habit* to call upon God? Or does he not rather cry out for God only in his times of agony, when God's fearful retributions crush him down?

11. I will teach you by the hand of God; *that* which is with the Almighty will I not conceal.

12. Behold, all ye yourselves have seen *it*; why then are ye thus altogether vain?

The meaning is not—I will teach you *by the help of God*; but this; I will teach *concerning God's hand*; concerning God's ways of dealing with the ungodly. So in the parallel clause: What is *with the Almighty*—his counsels and methods of dealing with the wicked, I will not conceal, but will speak of them in all plainness. Ye have all seen it; how comes it then that ye have spoken so unwisely—have said so much that was only vanity?—Job implies that though his friends had seen the facts of human life, they had reasoned from them with much fallacy—unto vain, indefensible conclusions.

13. This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, *which* they shall receive of the Almighty.

This gives the reader the subject-matter of the rest of the chapter—viz., the portion allotted to the wicked by the Almighty King. Forcefully it is spoken of as “their heritage”—the inheritance which falls to them and of which they may be very sure. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” “The wages of sin is death.”

14. If his children be multiplied, *it is* for the sword; and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.

15. Those that remain of him shall be buried in death and his widows shall not weep.

He may think himself blessed in many children; but alas! they will be only food for the sword to devour.—In v. 15, the word “death” signifies the pestilence, often thought and spoken of as a “*great Death*.” The sense is that those who escape the sword are swept to their early graves by the pestilence.—That “his widows make no lamentation” indicates forcibly that the woes of his household come too thick and fast and are too terrible to afford either time or heart for the customary oriental lamentations over the dead. Or, it may be implied that they die and nobody cares—so worthless or worse than worthless to society had they become!—The same thing is said (Ps. 78: 64) in a similar description of extreme calamity.

16. Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay;

17. He may prepare *it*, but the just shall put *it* on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.

18. He buildeth his house as a moth, and as a booth *that* the keeper maketh.

The wicked amass clothing for the righteous to wear, and silver for the righteous to divide among themselves. So God utilizes the wickedness of men to the benefit of the righteous—one of his

ways of just retribution upon sin—one of the glorious testimonies that the Great Father loves his offspring and seeks their real well-being.—The wicked man builds his house as the moth does his—for the moment only; or as a booth, a rude tent which the vineyard-keeper puts up for the few days while his presence by night is needed for the protection of his ripening fruit. He may flatter himself that he has built for long years—for a kind of earthly immortality. Alas, for his mistake!

19. The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered: he openeth his eyes, and he is not.

20. Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night.

21. The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth: and as a storm, hurleth him out of his place.

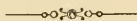
The rich man must lie down in death, despite of all that his riches can do to save him; but he “shall not be *gathered*” to the honored fathers who have gone before. This, we may remember, was the favored lot of the holy patriarchs—“gathered to their fathers”—to the glorious company of the hallowed dead. See Gen. 25: 8 and 35: 29 and 49: 29 and Jer. 8: 2 and Ezek. 29: 5. —But no such honor awaits the ungodly rich at their death.—The fearful suddenness of his death is expressed in the words—“He openeth his eyes, and he is not”! Quick as a wink of the eye, he is gone! Terrors overtake him, rushing on like the water-floods. In the stillness of the night, a tempest snatches him away. The Hebrew verb common for the sense “steal,” implies that it comes upon him unawares as a thief, yet resistless and terrible as a tempest.—The east wind—the dreaded Euroclydon of oriental lands and waters—bears him away and he is gone! Ah, it *hurls him stormwise* (the sense of the Heb. verb) from his place. So swift and resistless are the instruments of Jehovah’s vengeance to finish his work!

22. For *God* shall cast upon him, and not spare: he would fain flee out of his hand.

23. *Men* shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place.

These terrors that seize him—the storm and the whirlwind that hurl him out of the world, are put here as the very hand of the Almighty. “He” [God] “shall cast [his bolts of lightning] upon this wicked man and spare him not—show him no mercy! O how gladly would this smitten sinner flee from Jehovah’s hand—if only he could! This passage suggests Ps. 11: 6; “Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.” Both these passages have an eye on the rain of fire and brimstone upon guilty Sodom.—So universal is the feeling that this guilty man deserves to die and that his death will bring relief and blessing to

mankind that all unite to clap their hands over his fall and to hiss him out of his place among the living! In one aspect of his case, survivors may stand aghast before the awfulness of such a doom; but in another, they feel a sense of relief from a living curse and of rest under the retributive rule of the Almighty.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

Job still continues his speech.

This memorable chapter celebrates the praises of wisdom, and witnesses sublimely that man's search for it is vain, though he be able to bore the mountains and dive deep into the bowels of the everlasting hills for things most rare and precious. Beautifully Job introduces his theme by setting forth the methods of mining operations and the marvelous industry, skill and persistence which they evince (v. 1-11); then passes on to ask where wisdom shall be found (v. 12-14); and what most precious things can measure its value (v. 15-19);—returning again to the question—Whence shall wisdom come and where is its place of abode (v. 20-22); thus bringing us to the final and grand conclusion that none can know its home and none can bring it down to man save God himself. God has found it; has used it in his glorious works of creation, and commends it to his creature man, setting forth that the perfection of wisdom for mortals is “to fear the Lord and to depart from evil” (v. 23-28).

1. Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold *where they fine it.*

2. Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten *out of the stone.*

Job opens abruptly, his first word signifying—not “surely,” but *for*, as if he had before his mind the entire theme of the chapter:—For, though man knoweth the way to the silver and the gold of the mountains, yet he knoweth not the home and dwelling place of wisdom.—“A place for gold which men refine.”—*Copper* rather than “brass”—the latter being not a simple mineral, but a compound of copper and zinc. The miners find in the earth, therefore, not brass but copper—often however impure from being mixed with what may be popularly called “stone,” from which it is separated by fusion.

3. He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection: the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.

4. The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant; *even the waters* forgotten of the foot: they are dried up, they are gone away from men.

"Setting an end to darkness seems to mean that he penetrates to the very uttermost limit of its realm—*i. e.*, underneath the mountains, in the deep shafts which he sinks under the hills. He searches out—not "all perfection," but to the extreme end of that realm of darkness—the place where are found "stones of darkness," and where "the shadow of death" reigns.—In v. 4 our English version misses the sense. The following somewhat free translation will give the verse a tangible significance:—"He drives a shaft far away from man's abode; in paths forgotten of the foot; they hang pendulous, wanderers from among men." The miner sinks his shaft deep into the hills, along paths unknown to human feet; you see him hang suspended—gone like the roaming wanderer, far from where men dwell.

5. *As for* the earth, out of it cometh bread: and under it is turned up as it were fire.

6. The stones of it *are* the place of sapphires: and it hath dust of gold.

The earth's surface supplies the soil for man's bread; but its underlying regions are upturned, and desolated as with fire—which may seem to favor the Vulcan geological hypothesis. Unquestionably, the realm where the miner works bears abundant traces of fusion under intense heat.

7. *There is* a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen:

8. The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.

This under-realm of the miner—all unlike the wilderness and the solitary places on the earth's surface, lies where no bird of prey has seen—no lion's foot has trodden.

9. He putteth forth his hand upon the rock; he overturneth the mountains by the roots.

10. He cutteth out *rivers* among the rocks; and his eye seeth every precious thing. *Passage ways*

11. He bindeth the floods from overflowing; and *the thing that is hid* bringeth he forth to light.

This is what the miner does. In v. 11 he is said to bind the floods even from *dripping*, rather than "overflowing." He diverts the waters into channels cut for the purpose, so that they shall not be *weeping* upon him.

12. But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?

13. Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living.

14. The depth saith, *It is not in me*: and the sea saith, *It is not with me*.

The *place* and the *price* of wisdom are alike the object of inquiry. Man can search out the ruby and the sapphire; can bring up from the bowels of the earth most precious gold and silver; but where shall he find wisdom? He calls to the deep and is answered—"It is not in me." The "depth" and the "sea" are only poetic variations as to *name*—two names for the same thing.

15. It can not be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.

16. It can not be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.

17. The gold and the crystal can not equal it: and the exchange of it *shall not be for* jewels of fine gold.

18. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies.

19. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.

Grandly the poet calls for some precious thing which can measure the value of wisdom. All are too poor to supply any standard whatever which can adequately express it.

20. Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?

21. Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.

22. Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

He returns to the great question—"Whence cometh wisdom?" Hidden from all human eyes, never discovered even by the far-sighted fowls of the air; Destruction and Death have only heard the rumor of it, but even they have never seen it. That they should be thought of as having *heard* of wisdom, shall we say in the wailings of the lost who go down to the realms of destruction for the want thereof and the guilty abuse of what they did have—is inexpressibly touching, terribly suggestive.

23. God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.

24. For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven;

25. To make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure.

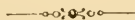
26. When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder ;

27. Then did he see it, and declare it ; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.

Man searches for the home and for the source or fountain of wisdom, all in vain ; but God understands the way thereof. Ah indeed, he knows it most perfectly. He saw it and brought it into requisition, what time he determined the weight for the winds and weighed out the great waters of the mighty seas, when he fixed the ordinances for the rain and ordained the law for the lightning and the thunder ;—then he saw what for him was infinite wisdom, and ingrafted its results into this glorious frame-work of nature and into her laws of sublimely grand operation.—The reader will recall the same line of thought in Prov. 8 : 22-31. Indeed it seems probable that the suggestive germs of thought in that chapter by Solomon were found in this of Job. The points of resemblance are manifold. Apparently, Job was the antecedent, and Solomon developed the germs he found here.

23. And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, ^{that is} wisdom ; and to depart from evil is understanding.

For man wisdom has a purpose and work far other than the framing of nature's laws or the construction of material worlds. To man he saith simply—"Behold, the fear of the Lord for thee is supreme wisdom ; to depart from evil is thy highest and best understanding. Be thou a humble disciple at the feet of thine Infinite Maker and Father ; so shall thy highest well-being be safe under his care, thy heart reposing forever in the fullness of his love.—God's wisdom is commended to us as seen in the fitness and order, the beauty and beneficence, the grandeur and the glory, of his visible works. Such wisdom must be adequate to instruct man in the way of life and peace. Listen, therefore, oh man, to the wise counsels of thine Infinite Maker. His voice proclaims : "Behold, the fear of the Lord"—reverential and obedient—"that is wisdom ;" "to depart from evil is for thee the highest and best understanding."



CHAPTER XXIX.

Job speaks of his better days.

The course of thought throughout this chapter is simple and obvious, all perfectly true to nature for one who is consciously broken down with disease and fallen from the position of influence and honor which he held in his better days. How often Job's

thought must have gone back to that honored and delightful Past—saddened only by the feeling—Will it ever return? Would it might possibly be!

1. Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,
2. Oh that I were as *in* months past, as *in* the days *when* God preserved me;
3. When his candle shined upon my head, *and when* by his light I walked *through* darkness;
4. As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God *was* upon my tabernacle;
5. When the Almighty *was* yet with me, *when* my children *were* about me.

The first and foremost element in that former happy life was—“*God preserved me*,” his lamp shone out over my head—with allusion to the lamp suspended from the center of an oriental tent, which shed down its soft and cheery light upon the heads of the household. Illumined with this light of God, he could most joyfully walk through darkness and know it not.—As I was in my *autumn* days (better than “days of my youth”) the word being used for the period of ripened fruits and the joy of the harvest ingathering. Job thinks of that as the time when he was reaping the precious harvests of a well spent life.—When the *favor* of God (more exact than the word “secret”)—when God’s favor rested upon my tent.—There is pertinence in the choice of the name “the Almighty”—when *He* who is almighty to save, infinitely strong to protect and defend and in every way to bless—was with me. And all my children—an unbroken family—were round about me. Oh how unlike this present unutterable desolation!—not a child spared to my home and to my heart!

6. When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil;

7. When I went out to the gate through the city, *when* I prepared my seat in the street!

8. The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, *and* stood up.

“Washed my steps with butter”—puts the thing somewhat more strongly than Job’s Hebrew words, which rather mean—My steps were bathed in milk—which he had in plenty.—“Streams of oil from the rock” seem to anticipate, by many whole centuries, the “petroleum” of our own times. I know not what other sense to give these words. “*Streams*” is more accurate than “rivers,” the Heb. word being currently used not for the great rivers of nature, but for the artificial channels cut by the hand of man for purposes of irrigation.

In those days Job seems to have officiated as judge, holding this position by virtue of his age, wisdom and known integrity.

Courts being held at the city gates, Job was there in business hours, placing his seat in the *open spaces* near the gate—so the Heb. word means—and not “in the street,” considered as the thoroughfare of travel. At his coming, young men retired respectfully and quietly, while the aged arose and stood in honor of their chief.

9. The princes refrained talking, and laid *their* hand on their mouth.

10. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.

11. When the ear heard *me*, then it blessed me ; and when the eye saw *me*, it gave witness to me :

12. Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and *him that had none* to help him.

13. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me : and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

“When the eye saw me it gave witness” by such tokens of recognition as were most significant of profound respect. Noticeably the ground for this honest respect was the intrinsic justice and goodness of Job's decisions. He proved himself worthy of all honor, and his people gladly accorded it to him. The widows and the fatherless were loud and emphatic in his praise, and all humanity was glad thereof!

14. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me : my judgment *was* as a robe and a diadem.

In this verse we have a very curious play upon words, resulting in noble thought, beautifully expressed. Literally we might render:—*I put on righteousness, and it put on me.* But by usage the sense of the first clause is, I put on righteousness, not as a hypocritical, outside show, but by taking it into my very being (as Paul speaks of “putting on Christ”)—engrafting it into my character; conforming my heart and life to its principles and behests.

Then “righteousness put on me” in the sense of honoring me as its worthy representative, and of being itself set forth well recommended and illustrated by my example.—The last clause of the verse declares—My inherent justice, always manifesting itself in my life, became to me as a robe and a diadem—right royal apparel.

15. I was eyes to the blind, and feet *was* I to the lame.

16. I *was* a father to the poor : and the cause *which* I knew not I searched out.

17. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

We shall be excused if we envy Job the sweet recollections of such a life. Giving one's best and utmost labor to blessings upon

the needy; becoming eyes to the blind and feet to the lame and succor to the wronged;—ah, angels might be thankful for such work to do and for the joy that comes of it!—"The cause I had not known" (v. 16) we may suppose to be that of one personally a stranger—a fact which shows that Job's humane sympathies were broader than the circle of old friends or personal acquaintance.—The "*searching out*" testifies to his substantial integrity and patient industry, sparing no pains to get the whole truth and to award full and equal justice. A magnificent model for a judge!

The recollection of such a life would have refreshed the soul of this great sufferer, but for the agonizing perplexity of the problem—Why does God scourge me thus, apparently for a life so honest and so true to the interests of humanity and to the known will of my Maker?—In v. 17, Job tacitly compares the man of violence, fraud, or extortion, to a wild beast—the hyenas or lions of the desert. I brake in his fangs; I plucked from his teeth his prey—the flesh he had torn off from his victim. This last verb, "plucked," carries in it the further sense—*cast it forth*—plucked it out *and* put it in a place of safety.

18. Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply *my* days as the sand.

19. My root *was* spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon *my* branch.

20. My glory *was* fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand.

Why should not Job naturally assume that under the providence of a God at once just and good, his life of integrity and piety, "fearing God and eschewing evil," would have no reverses; would escape all calamities, and certainly all manifest inflictions from God's hand. "I shall die in my nest," having numbered my earthly days as the sand. He could not drop his eye on his present case without astonishment—nay, amazement. How did it perplex and confound him—that such a life, under the rule of such a God, should lead on into this dreadful misery!

Taking his imagery from the vegetable world, he says—My root is open to the waters; the dew lies all night on my branch:—conditions which in his climate ensured growth, freshness, fertility.—"My glory fresh upon me" still follows out the same figure, the glory of vegetable life being its perpetual freshness.—By what processes the bow [of war] was renewed in strength in the hand is not certainly known; perhaps by unbending it to give the fibers opportunity to recover their normal elasticity and force.

21. Unto me *men* gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel.

22. After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them.

23. And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide *as* for the latter rain.

Not, "kept silence *at* my counsel," as if he meant to say, when I advised it; but kept silence, waiting *for* my counsel. This is the well defined sense of the Hebrew.—"My speech dropped"—better, *dripped*, fell like the dew, grateful, refreshing. In those dry, desert regions, waiting for the rain is a figure full of significance.

24. *If* I laughed on them, they believed *it* not; and the light of my countenance they cast not down.

25. I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one *that* comforteth the mourners.

Smile gives the true sense better than "laugh," since the latter might imply contempt which would be utterly out of place here. "I smiled on them:" they could not believe their eyes: it seemed too good to be true. They did nothing to cause the light of my countenance to fall—used like the phrase—"his countenance fell," meaning that for smiles came frowns.—My judgment and expressed will determined their course [or as some critics take it,] I gladly put myself in their company, and sat among them an acknowledged chief; or like a king at the head of his armed hosts; yet not ruling despotically, but enjoying the consideration and love accorded to him who comforts mourners.—All in all, a most delightful description of an Arab chieftain, a Shiek among his people, of most amiable spirit and most benign influence, enjoying the unbounded esteem and respect of his tribe.



CHAPTER XXX.

Job speaks of his sad and desolate present.

This chapter paints Job's present in contrast with his past, as in chap. 29. There, in the highest honor; here, in utter dishonor; there, prosperous and happy, his cup filled with all desirable earthly good; here, afflicted, overwhelmed, abhorred of men, denied a hearing of God; his cup absolutely full with all imaginable forms of human misery. Noticeably Job sets forth the depth of dishonor into which he had sunk by showing how mean and low were the people who now looked down contemptuously upon him (v. 1-15);—and then describes by various figures the depth of his sorrows and the utter desolation of his state, especially because he is so manifestly forsaken of God (v. 16-31).

1. But now *they that are* younger than I, have me in de-

rision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.

2. Yea, whereto *might* the strength of their hands *profit* me, in whom old age was perished?

3. For want and famine *they were* solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste.

The great respect for age, universal in those days throughout all oriental society, makes this a strong point—that those far younger than himself should mock and insult him, even boys whose fathers were so far below him in social rank that he had disdained to set them with the dogs of his flock.—V. 2 heightens the picture of those scoffing young men by saying that the strength of their hands could avail him nothing were they never so well disposed, for all their hope of a vigorous old age had perished and gone. Vice and crime had exhausted their vital forces long before their normal time. Such imbecility sinks young men to the lowest point of worthlessness and contempt.—In v. 3, the best modern critics give a different meaning to several words. Not “solitary,” but *famished* with want and hunger. Instead of “fleeing into the wilderness,” some put it—*gnawing down the desert* as cattle and horses gnaw down the bare pastures for a hard living. Rather than—“in former time desolate,” Gesenius puts it—*the night or darkness of desolate wastes*—assuming that darkness is made a figure for extreme desolation.—All these words in question are of rare occurrence. Hence their precise significance is somewhat in doubt.

4. Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots *for* their meat.

5. They were driven forth from among *men*, (they cried after them as *after* a thief).

6. To dwell in the cliffs of the valley, *in* caves of the earth, and *in* the rocks.

7. Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.

8. *They were* children of fools, yea, children of base men; they were viler than the earth.

These low, savage tribes are well described by the food on which they subsist—the wild shrubs and roots which the desert affords. They were driven forth from the abodes of civilized men who shouted after them—hooted them off as men do the thief—to dwell in horrible ravines, in caverns and rock fissures. It is a question whether these are not the aboriginal “Horites”—which is the very word used here, translated “Caves”—an old race of savage men, several times alluded to in Hebrew history; *e. g.*, Gen. 14: 6 and 36: 20 and Deut. 2: 12, 22.—Remarkably, their thoroughly savage nature and life were manifest in

their voice, more asinine than human; more like the braying of an ass than the melody of cultured eloquence or music.—Under the nettles they lie *sprawled out*—this being more true to the original than merely “gathered together.”—In v. 8 the last clause means, “they were beaten [driven] out of the land,”—too mean, too low and vicious to be tolerated among civilized people.

9. And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword.

10. They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.

Even such men, so utterly base and contemptible, affect to despise and abhor me. They stand aloof from me as if fearing some contamination from my presence; “they do not forbear to spit before me”—this being without question the sense of the original. But the reader should remember that according to oriental ideas, to spit in another’s presence was no less insulting than to spit in his face.—Let us bear in mind throughout this passage that Job measures the deep dishonor and contempt into which he had fallen among men, by the utter abasement of these savage people who affected to despise him.

11. Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.

Here we must read—not my “cord” but *his*, referring to God who is thought of as loosing the cord which had restrained him from inflicting the scourge upon Job. Because God had applied the dreadful scourge upon his servant Job with apparently no restraint and almost without measure, they also cast off their restraining bridle, and poured their contempt on Job with loose rein. Job means to say that they felt themselves free to insult and torment him because they supposed him to be stricken and smitten of God.

12. Upon *my right hand* rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.

13. They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper.

The word “youth” is too respectful to represent the Hebrew which has here none of its usual words for *youth*, but a rare term, better translated *brood* or *herd*—a rabble. Being boys in years, they ought to have treated the aged Job with deference; but instead, they thrust aside his feet—*i. e.*, to trip him up as he passed near them.*—“Raising against him their ways of destruction,”

*Some critics however take the clause in the same sense as in Job 24: 4—referring it to one’s *right path*—to the enjoyment of his rights. But in the latter sense, we always have a different verb from the one here, viz., (רָצַח)

borrow its terms from military life—the raising of mounds from which to assault a fortified city. The sense—They deliberately, industriously contrive to abuse, insult, destroy me.—“They break up my path”—tear up the ground before me—making it rugged, impassable. They help on my utter fall; there is none to help me against them—this being the obvious sense of the last clause of v. 13.

14. They came *upon me* as a wide breaking in of waters; in the desolation they rolled themselves *upon me*.

15. Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind; and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.

They rush upon me with insult and wrong as water-floods rush through a yawning crevasse in the dyke. They come upon me as such floods roll on, wave upon wave. “Terrors” constitute the tide that is thus turned and let loose upon me. They chase away my dignity—my princely estate—even as a wind-storm drives and beats down all before it. My prosperity [salvation, Heb.] has passed away as a cloud does.—By these accumulated figures Job sets forth the unutterable desolation that has come over him, especially in the contempt heaped upon him by the basest of men.

It is remarkable that thus far in this chapter, Job does not put in the foreground his loss of property, nor of children, nor even his physical sufferings; but prominently and almost exclusively the contempt manifested toward him by the lowest specimens of beings called human. And this was specially afflictive because it suggested and even reflected back upon him the rebuke of the Almighty. These meanest of men thought the ways of God toward Job justified them in turning upon him their utmost insult and abuse.

16. And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.

17. My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest.

18. By the great force of *my disease* is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.

“My soul poured out” [not *upon* but] “within me”—by a figure similar to that in 22: 16; “God maketh my heart *soft*,” no strength, no firmness left in me. Days of affliction have seized upon me and hold me in their dreadful grip.—In the last clause of v. 17, better than “sinews” is the word *gnawers*—the *gnawing* pains eating into my sensitive nerves.—In v. 18 “my garment” is probably his *skin*, thought of as covering his tortured nerves as a garment does the body—his skin being the seat of his disease.—“Changed,” in the sense of disfigured—this form of the verb being used in the sense of *disguised*—so altered in appearance as to forbid recognition. This skin, shrivelled, shrunk, cracked—came to bind him about as a close-fitting tunic.

19. He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.

20. I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me : I stand up, and thou regardest me *not*.

21. Thou art become cruel to me : with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.

22. Thou liftest me up to the wind ; thou causest me to ride *upon it*, and dissolvest my substance.

Job attributes all this to God's immediate agency. Worst of all, when I cry to God, he does not hear : I stand up and thou seest me [so the Hebrew], yet givest me no answer—no token of favoring recognition.—(V. 22) Thou liftest me up to the wind, to expose me to its utmost violence, and dost cause me to be borne away on its rudest blast.—In the last clause—not, “dissolvest my substance,” but causest me to be dissolved *in the crash of the tempest*—utterly broken in pieces, powerless to resist the tornado of thy wrath.

23. For I know *that* thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

24. Howbeit he will not stretch out *his* hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.

Job sees death near and certain ; and (v. 24) knows that then no prayer can be availing. The English version of this is infelicitous. Better thus : Surely, there is no prayer [to purpose] when he [God] stretcheth forth the hand, nor is any cry for help possible [or availing] for them when He destroys.

25. Did not I weep for him that was in trouble ? was *not* my soul grieved for the poor ?

Is it supposable that Job meant to put his own compassion in hearing the cry of the suffering, in contrast with what he had just before said of God ? Or does he allude to his own case only to suggest how strange and perplexing the ways of God seemed to his view ?—Instead of the interrogative form, the strongly affirmative better expresses the original ;—Most surely, verily, I have wept for those who were “*hard of day*”—having a hard time. My soul sorrowed for the poor.

26. When I looked for good, then evil came *unto me* : and when I waited for light, there came darkness.

27. My bowels boiled, and rested not : the days of affliction prevented me.

28. I went mourning without the sun : I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.

29. I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.

It was one bitter element of his great sorrow that it came un-

expectedly. He had hoped—and thought he might reasonably hope—that a life devoted to “fearing God and eschewing evil” would insure him peace and prosperity. Why not?—But now, when he looked for good, there came evil.—In v. 27, “prevent” needs the modification usual throughout our English version, to the sense *anticipate—to get in before me* and meet me, as it were, in the face.—“I went mourning without the sun”—should rather be—I go about blackened, yet not with sun-heat; the body fearfully disfigured, made foul with disease. Sun-heat was not the cause.—“A brother to jackalls”—cast out of the society of men, moaning and wailing in lonely desolation! Alas! what a picture of deep and crushing grief!—These animals were well known examples of sad, plaintive outeries.

30. My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.

31. My harp also is *turned* to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.

A fever-heat consuming his bones—what can his harp and organ give forth but plaintive notes of woe!

The close of this chapter is a suitable point at which to arrest the special exposition of detached passages and give our thought a moment to one of the great moral lessons of the book, viz., The social and moral bearings of the doctrine that suffering in this life *not only presupposes sin, but accurately measures its aggravation*; inasmuch as good or evil, sent of God in his providence, must be taken as blessing or curse, adjusted to a perfect retribution in time. Such, we have seen, was the doctrine of Job's three friends—men moving in the highest and most intelligent social circles. It is equally manifest in the Horites described in this chapter, moving far down on the social scale in the lowest barbarism.

What was the social and moral influence of this doctrine as shown in their treatment of Job?

Taking separately these two extremes of society, and turning first to the higher class represented by Job's three friends, we take them to be men who fairly represent the religious class, for else they would not have been numbered among Job's special friends. This mistaken view of God's ways in providence had the effect on their souls of drying up almost the last drop of human sympathy. They felt so sure that Job was wicked, even one of the most wicked of men, that they felt bound to push this conviction of theirs persistently upon him; to charge him with crimes all unknown to his life; to suppress every manifestation of pity, compassion or sympathy, and give the utmost scope to what they deemed their paramount duty—viz., to convict him of crimes, though he had never committed them—of sins as to which he was consciously innocent, and to make him believe, if they could, that his unprecedented sufferings were God's witnesses to prove him the chief of sinners. Miserable comforters were they all!—for no

other men aggravated his sufferings so fearfully as they. They could torture him in no way so effectually as by perpetually pushing him into the feeling that God was exposing and punishing some great sin of his.—Apparently these three friends were too good to be reached by envy at Job's great prosperity and the consequent mean gratification of their own selfishness over his fall. Those contemptible savages, depicted in this chap. 30, may have been open to such feelings, for men who are conscious of being on the lowest plane of human character are naturally glad to see men of high social position and of the finest moral character, brought down. But we will not suspect that any views of this sort had poisoned the souls of these old friends of Job. That which is so repulsive to us in their cold-hearted philippics upon Job must be put to the account of their doctrine of providence which in their view compelled them to infer that Job was only a vile hypocrite, an enemy of God, a monster in crime. Ah, they had not heard the Savior of men expound the true doctrine in answer to the question, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9: 2, 3); or in both asking and answering, on another occasion: "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay," etc., (Luke 13: 1-5).—Doubtless we may conclude that one moral purpose to be answered (incidentally) by this book of Job was to throw light upon the terrible mischiefs of the false doctrine held by Job's friends. If that doctrine were to prevail, how fearfully would Christian sympathy with great sufferers be ruled out of human bosoms, and how terribly would Christian fidelity to the souls of the suffering be perverted to their insupportable agony!



CHAPTER XXXI.

Conscious of innocence, Job imprecates calamities upon himself if he has been guilty as his friends had charged.

In this last long speech of Job, he very properly avers his innocence of the great crimes charged upon him by his friends. Some of these had been charged specifically (*e. g.*, by Eliphaz, chap. 22); others were fully implied in the general imputation of the greatest and most scandalous sins. Naturally the sins brought out in detail here are those in worst repute in that oriental society, estimated by the standard of public opinion in that age and country.—We shall have occasion to notice that Job makes these protestations of innocence as in the presence of the Great Searcher of hearts whose soul is too pure and eye too keen not to see and condemn iniquity (v. 2-4). The strain of the chapter in general is that of specifying great sins and then affirming himself innocent

of them—imprecating on himself the extremest judgments *if* he has been guilty.

1. I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

This first verse stands by itself, giving a specimen of the habit of his godly life as a man who “eschewed evil.” He guarded his soul carefully, vigilantly, against the *approaches* of temptation. He made a covenant with his eyes that they should not become a snare to seduce him toward sin.

2. For what portion of God *is there* from above? and *what* inheritance of the Almighty from on high?

3. *Is not* destruction to the wicked? and a strange *punishment* to the workers of iniquity?

4. Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?

“Portion of the Almighty” must not be understood to mean *a part of* him, but an allotment or award made by him and coming upon men *from* him. So the second and parallel clause means, an inheritance from and by him as the wages of sin. Is not this allotment from the Almighty one of destruction to the wicked—of calamity—appalling, overwhelming—upon the workers of iniquity?—and coming, moreover, from One who sees all my ways? —Thus in the very opening of this chapter, Job expresses his deep conviction that God’s justice insures the punishment of the wicked, and that his omniscience renders all concealment and evasion utterly and forever impossible.

5. If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit;

6. Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.

If my life has been a lie, swerving from truth and living falsehood and deceit, He will weigh me in scales of justice (so the Hebrew has it), and God will know my innocence. This translation is shaped closely to the original. I take it therefore to express Job’s solemn confidence that his general integrity of life would abide the scrutiny of God; and that the charge of hypocrisy and of a false, deceitful life, could not stand.

7. If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands;

8. *Then* let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.

“If my steps have deflected” (this Heb. verb always in a bad sense) “from *the way*”—*i. e.*, the *right way* (the Heb. article implying this) *the only fit way*; and if my heart has gone after my

eyes (see v. 1)—the eye seducing the heart; then let my harvests be for others to eat; let my crops (products of my planting) be torn up by the roots—the thought being not of offspring in the sense of children but of vegetable growths that others might root up.

9. If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbor's door;

10. *Then* let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her.

11. For this is a heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.

12. For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all my increase.

If my heart hath been enticed toward woman, and I have been an adulterer, let my own wife become the menial slave of another, to grind at his hand-mill (the service assigned to the lowest slave), and let her be another's concubine. For this is a heinous crime, the Heb. word involving the element of purpose, thought, plotting; and therefore more flagrant than sins of inadvertence or of sudden impulse.—A crime for the judges, *i. e.*, to take cognizance of, and to punish—evinced a somewhat advanced stage of civilization.—Moreover, this is a sin of terrible power for mischief, one that devours even to the bottomless pit—ruins the sinner, soul and body. Noticeably, Solomon bears the same testimony to the aggravation of this sin and to its sure, swift, terrible mischiefs, (Prov. 6: 24-35).

13. If I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me;

14. What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?

15. Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?

Noble sentiments, forcibly put! How deep and how just is Job's conviction that God befriends the defenseless poor, and will surely arouse himself to vindicate their cause and bring retribution on their oppressors! Is not He the Father of the servant as truly as of his master? Did not One—*i. e.*, the one only God and Father of all—fashion us all before our birth?

16. If I have withheld the poor from *their* desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;

17. Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;

18. (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb;)

“Caused the eyes of the widow to fail,”—literally to consume away as with hopeless tears and bitter grief. If I have been reckless as to the rights of hospitality and as to the claims of the fatherless, the orphan, otherwise destitute. From his early youth;—he might say even from his mother’s womb, he had been brought up with poor orphans by his side, fed from the same table. —The sweet charities that reached and blessed the dependent classes in those days were individual and personal, and not as is largely the case in our times, administered through “Asylums for the orphan” and “Homes for the friendless.” Men of large means and large hearts also are represented by Job as shown here—exceedingly to their honor and richly to the culture of genuine benevolence.

19. If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering;

20. If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were *not* warmed with the fleece of my sheep;

21. If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate;

22. *Then* let mine arm fall from my shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.

23. For destruction *from* God *was* a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.

Not food only and home did Job supply to the needy, but clothing.—“If his loins have not blessed me” for the comfort of warm clothing—as if his loins were themselves intelligently conscious and grateful.—“When I saw my help in the gate”—my *helper*, one who could help me carry my suit against them in the court [“gate”]. If when I had a legal advantage and might have carried my case against them, I pushed my claim, contrary to the law of kindness and benevolence; then let my arm drop from my shoulder-blade, etc. For how could I endure the destruction God would send upon me for such inhumanity?—The last clause better thus:—“Before his majesty, I *could not*; I should be *powerless*!”

24. If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, *Thou art* my confidence;

25. If I rejoiced because my wealth *was* great, and because mine hand had gotten much;

To make gold one’s idol-god and large wealth the real trust of the heart, is but too often the besetting sin of the prosperous Job avers his innocence of this sin.

26. If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking *in* brightness;

27. And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand;

28. This also *were* an iniquity *to be punished by* the judge ; for I should have denied the God *that is* above.

This is the earliest known form of idolatry—the worship of the heavenly bodies.—“My mouth hath kissed my hand”—is not exactly accurate, the Hebrew being—“If my hand hath gently touched my mouth”—after which the hand was waved toward the distant object, as if to pass up the kiss as an act of worship.—This form of idolatry was a civil crime, punishable at law ; and moreover, would involve really a denial of God’s supreme and exclusive right to the homage of his intelligent creatures. Both points go far to prove in Job’s age and country a very considerable knowledge of the true God and of the obligations of men to worship and serve *Him*, and Him only.

29. If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him ;

30. (Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.)

To this sin of the heart, as opposed to sins of external act, there are subtle temptations—so subtle that few altogether escape them.—“Lifted up myself,” elated and glad, perhaps boastful, when evil befell him.—“By wishing a curse,” is rather, by asking, with cursing, for his life, *i. e.*, by imprecations against his life.

The reader will notice that throughout a somewhat extended passage, beginning here and continuing to v. 34, the sense is suspended—Job saying, *If* I have done this ; *if* I have done that, etc.,—till at length (v. 34) we find the curse which, if guilty, he imprecates upon himself.

31. If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh ! we can not be satisfied.

32. The stranger did not lodge in the street : *but* I opened my doors to the traveler.

In v. 31 our English version not only fails to give the sense well, but really gives the very opposite of what Job said. According to our English, the men of Job’s tent *did* say—“Oh that we had some of his flesh to eat ! We famish and can not have enough”—which would have been a flagrant violation, not of the law of kindness only, but of justice. What Job really said was this : The men of my tent say—Who will give [or produce] one, not satisfied to the full with his flesh ? They challenge the world to produce a man who, being present there, has not been amply fed at Job’s table. “The men of his tent” were his servants, waiting upon his guests. They could speak from personal knowledge.

33. If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom :

According to the history in Gen. 3, Adam was an illustrative case of covering sin in these several respects:—that he did not

confess the fact till forced to it; that he sought to cover his guilt by apologies and self-vindications; and sought to hide himself personally from the eye of his Maker—all these efforts being alike futile and foolish, as all attempts to cover sin from the eye of God must always be. Job had been boldly and persistently charged with hypocrisy. It was therefore pertinent to his case to place this on the list of sins of which he was not guilty.

34. Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, *and* went not out of the door?

The English version here is specially infelicitous in many respects. The Hebrew gives no authority for putting the verse in the form of a question. It is by no means clear how "keeping silence" and "not going forth from his door" because he was "afraid of a great multitude," should be a sin. This translation fails therefore to make any proper sense.—The clew to its real significance lies in making it what grammarians call the *apodosis* of the sentence. In this case, the sentence is long, beginning as far back as v. 29. From that point onward to this verse 34, the sense has been suspended: *If* I rejoiced over my enemy's fall; *if* the men of my tent have not had occasion to say that never a stranger failed of bread in Job's house; *if* I have covered my sin as Adam—then what? Something must be put as the curse imprecated upon himself *if* these sins should be proven upon him. What is this something? What is the counterpart [apodosis] of this long sentence?—It is found in this verse—which should commence: *Then*, in that case, let me dread [tremble before] the great assembly: let the contempt of whole tribes confound me; let me be dumb, nor venture forth from my door [for shame]!—So read, the verse amounts to a terrible imprecation. Let the most public disgrace overwhelm me! Let me be forced to slink away from the public eye and never show my face again!

35. Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire *is*, *that* the Almighty would answer me, and *that* mine adversary had written a book.

36. Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, *and* bind it as a crown to me.

37. I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.

In previous speeches Job had passionately invoked a hearing before God; (*e. g.*, chap. 13: 3, 19–24) "Surely, I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God. Call thou, and I will answer; or let me speak, and answer thou me." Here, in language borrowed from the forms in human tribunals, he repeats the same request: "Oh, that there were some one to hear me!" "Behold my sign"—or mark! So the word translated "desire" should be put. This sign of the cross (†) was equivalent to the

signature of his name, and in this connection it implied that he had put his case in writing and now indorsed it and would stand to it before the court.—He proceeds: "Let the Almighty answer me; let my legal opponent (literally, the one who is to plead against me) put his charge in writing." The sense is not by any means that he wishes his adversary were an *author* that he might (forsooth) have the license of a critic to review and scathe him! Far enough from that is the sense here. Oh, that he would put his charge *in writing*; then *if* I would not take it upon my shoulder and bind it upon my head as a crown! The whole number of my steps (all my moral conduct) I would put before him; I would come near him like a prince. I should not shrink away abashed under conscious guilt; nay, verily; but I would meet him fearlessly and challenge the fullest investigation.—A stronger assertion of substantial innocence of the grievous charges brought against him by his opponents, Job could not have made. He declares himself ready for an investigation before the Infinite God!

38. If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain;

39. If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:

40. Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.

One more sin is named here, in the same hypothetical way: If I have been guilty of this, let the proper retribution come upon me in the line of my sin.—The sin is that of defrauding his tenants and withholding the wages of his farm-laborers. Remarkably he thinks of the land itself as remonstrating against such oppression and the very furrows as weeping in sympathy with the wronged laborers. "If my land cry out against me"—a witness pained and horrified by my crimes; "and all its furrows weep" (the literal sense of the Hebrew); "If I have eaten the strength (*i. e.*, the products) of my land without paying my laborers honorably; if I have made its tenants sigh [or breathe] out their life—(*i. e.*) under the wrong, or perhaps the pinching want, of my oppressive hand;—then let thistles come forth of it instead of wheat, and weeds, worthless and even noxious, instead of barley.

And so Job rested his defense.—If we construe his vindication strictly within the limits of the charges brought against him by his three friends, understanding him to deny what they alleged and no more, we shall find ample ground for his justification.

But if, on the other hand, we give his words a far broader application and suppose him to have claimed entire sinlessness as before and toward God, we must find judgment against him and condemn not his rashness only, but his very shallow self-knowledge and sadly inadequate sense of the purity of God's law and of the

holiness of his Maker.—It deserves careful notice that the whole attitude and argument of his opponents pushed him violently into self-vindication, and made his temptation in this line strong—perhaps resistless. His feelings became too excited for the calm discrimination which the case demanded. The golden mean would have been reached, if while he calmly rebutted the cruel and unfounded charges brought against him, he had also humbly acknowledged himself very far from absolute purity as toward his Infinite Maker. In the final result, he became deeply, thoroughly humbled before God, and then was graciously accepted.—In his whole bearing throughout the discussion he was far less culpable and less wide from the line of rectitude, than his friends were.

For their severity and their groundless allegations against Job, the Lord had no apology, but demanded of them most humble confession, and sent them to Job to ask his prayers in their behalf. The final result, as we shall see, was a strong showing of the pernicious influence of their mistaken doctrine in respect to God's moral administration of good and evil as to men, but especially toward pious men in the present life.



CHAPTER XXXII.

Elihu Appears.

A new and noticeable feature of this book next invites attention—the introduction of a young man—a fifth personage in this drama—who appears as a sort of umpire in the great controversy between Job and his three friends. No notice of him has appeared in the book till this moment; yet he has been present from the beginning, and has listened carefully to all that has been said on both sides. When he saw that the discussion had run its course; that the three friends had retired from the contest, apparently in despair of bringing Job to their views of his case, and that Job had finished his defense, his soul was mightily stirred within him, and he broke his long silence, as we shall see.

It is a somewhat grave question what part Elihu was expected to bear in this drama; and what ultimate ends were to be answered by his introduction and his long speech. As bearing on this question, it should be remembered that in the final decision of the case by the Lord himself (chap. 38-42) no allusion whatever is made to this young man or to his part in the discussion. The Lord replied to Job; he also gave his opinion as to Job's three friends, but was silent as to Elihu. Whether he approved or disapproved of Elihu's doctrine, no hint is given.—These points

will be resumed after we have read his speech, when we shall be in better position to take in all its relations and bearings.

Another remarkable fact in the case is that the part of umpire, on the human side of this controversy, should be assigned to a *young*—rather than to an *aged* man. Ordinarily the fathers are relied on for sound wisdom, cool-headed judgment, the absence of prejudice and the judicious application of principles long time profoundly weighed in the light of the observed facts of human life. How happens it then that here, the youngest man of the party is reserved, or, shall we say, reserves himself, for the last word—the candid review of the whole discussion—to point out the failure of the three more aged disputants and to indicate to Job his sense of the very exceptionable things in his defense? Was the choice of Elihu, the youngest man of the group, for this service, purposely suggestive that *the age was one of progress*; that better views of the great questions at issue were breaking in upon the minds of men, which better views, though scarcely accepted by the aged, were yet molding the thought of the young?—There can, I judge, be no doubt that the human mind was then moving forward to juster views of the great problem of this book—the ways of God in providence as related both to moral discipline and to righteous retribution in the present life; and also on another point incidentally involved, *i. e.*, the true grounds for submission to God's will and for trust, despite of the impenetrable darkness of his dispensations. Whether the assignment of the part he bore to Elihu was designed to be suggestive of the march of public opinion on these great problems, is a question worthy of consideration—open however to every man's own inquiries and conclusions. We shall at least deem it in place to scan the doctrines of this young man very closely and note in what respects they are really in advance of what had been said on either side before.

In this book Elihu fills six chapters (32–37). Chap. 32 is throughout introductory: first, an historical introduction by the compiler of the book (v. 1–5): next, Elihu's introduction of himself, in which he bears at least the appearance of true modesty, apologizing quite sufficiently for what might be deemed an intrusion of himself—so young a man—into a discussion held between men much his seniors in age. This great deference to that beautiful sentiment of the orientals which instinctively does so much honor to age, we may perhaps enjoy the more because its beauty and glory have grown dim—not to say, have so far faded out among Americans of the nineteenth century.

1. So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

2. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.

3. Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and *yet* had condemned Job.

4. Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they *were* elder than he.

5. When Elihu saw that *there was* no answer in the mouth of *these* three men, then his wrath was kindled.

Buz, from whom comes the tribal name "the Buzite," is supposed to have been a son of Nahor, and thus a nephew of Abraham; also a brother of Uz who gave name to the country in which Job lived. (See Gen. 22: 21). *How remote* an ancestry is not indicated, so that we miss the definite data we should gladly find for the chronological place of these events.—His probable descent from Nahor suggests another line of inquiry:—Was he not from Mesopotamia rather than (like some or all the other disputants) from Edom and great Arabia—*i. e.*, from the country where Abram first made his acquaintance with the true God, and where more light of revelation had shined than in any other region of the East? Is it not therefore supposable that on the score of both ancestry and early residence, he may represent an advanced doctrine as to God and his providential administration?

"His anger kindled" should not suggest to our thought any malign passion—a man *mad*; but only a mind warmly excited, thoroughly stirred up under the conviction of a service to perform; words to speak which the exigencies earnestly demanded. He was deeply moved, to see that Job pushed his self-defense to the extreme apparently of implicating God as unrighteous, by representing himself as injured, wronged, by his Maker.—Toward the three friends his soul was stirred because they had so manifestly failed to convict Job, and yet persisted in condemning him.

6. And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, *I am* young, and ye *are* very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.

7. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.

8. But *there is* a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

9. Great men are not *always* wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.

Being so much younger than ye all, I said—"Days should speak;" let youth be silent. But there is a limit to this law. Its claims may be pushed beyond reason; for verily, there is a measure of divine inspiration accorded to man. God has given him capabilities for thought, observation, knowledge, wisdom; and these sublime gifts (he would suggest) may be granted to the young and developed in the early stages of human life. Knowledge and wisdom are not always to be measured by years or by social po-

sition. Not all great men are wise; not all the aged stand above other men in understanding.

10. Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion.

11. Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say.

12. Yea, I attended unto you, and behold, *there was* none of you that convinced Job, *or* that answered his words:

The clause—"I also will show my opinion," falls short of the original in the degree of emphasis upon the word "I." Elihu said what is fully equivalent to this: "I also, even *I*, will show, etc.—After the most careful attention to the discussion even to its close, Elihu saw that the three disputants had neither convinced Job of his sin, nor answered his arguments. In both these respects they had made a signal failure. In the line of convincing Job of his sin, they attempted quite too much, and hence their efforts reacted. They only grieved without persuading; offended without convicting. As to meeting and answering his arguments, they made either feeble attempts, or none at all.

13. Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man.

This somewhat obscure verse may admit either of these two constructions, each of which assumes that Job's three friends are addressed:—(a) Say not—We have found out wisdom; and since we have failed [to convince Job], it is certain that not man but God must cast him down; demolish his arguments and convince his stubborn soul. Or (b) Your failure is ordained of God, "*lest* ye should say, We have found out all wisdom, and that ye may know that not man but God must cast Job down."—The difference between the two lies mainly in this—that the latter looks back of the human act to God's purpose in permitting or ordaining it; the former puts the case as an admonition by the speaker; and leaves it there.*

14. Now he hath not directed *his* words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches.

Elihu would be understood to be impartial, not entering upon this discussion with personal feelings. Job has not attacked *me*: I am not incited in a partisan spirit to defend myself. I do not propose to reply to him as ye have done.

15. They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.

* Beyond question the Hebrew word (לֹא), the first in this verse, usually means "*lest*." The lexicons hold that in the beginning of a sentence it may simply prohibit;—Fuerst says of this case, "Cautiously prohibit."

16. When I had waited, for they spake not, but stood still, *and* answered no more,

17. *I said*, I will answer also my part; I also will shew my opinion.

In the last clause of v. 15, the Hebrew is in this strong form: *Words were removed far away from them*; they could get hold of nothing more to say.—V. 17 (like v. 10 above, only more so,) makes the word “*I*” intensely emphatic: “I will answer, even I; I, yea even I, will show my opinion.

18. For I am full of matter; the spirit within me constraineth me.

19. Behold, my belly is as wine *which* hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.

20. I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer.

“Full of matter” is, strictly, full of *words*.—The orientals made very free use of their words “belly,” “bowels,” as the seat of emotion and even of thought, as we use the words heart, breast, bosom.—My belly is like a wine vessel that can not *breathe* [Heb.]—can not throw off its accumulating gases—as new bottles that are bursting. Hence he naturally says, Let me speak that I may relieve myself. “Let me” (rather than “I will”) gives the precise shade of the original.

21. Let me not, I pray you, accept any man’s person; neither let me give flattering titles unto man.

22. For I know not to give flattering titles; *in so doing*, my Maker would soon take me away.

Sensible of the great importance of the most rigid impartiality, he would forearm himself against the least respect of persons.—The Hebrew has a nice play upon the various senses of the word used every-where in the phrase “accept the person”—which literally signifies—to *take* or *take up the face*. Elihu says, If I should take up any man’s face, my Maker would soon *take up me!*—take me in hand for purposes far other than flattery or favoritism.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

Elihu opens his argument.

Elihu enters upon his expostulation with Job, gently, cautiously, yet as one in earnest;—first with yet more words of introduction (v. 1-7); then proceeding to the first count in his indictment, he charges Job with having claimed spotless inno-

cence as toward God, and also with having entered complaint against God of injustice (v. 8-13); then shows how God reveals himself to man for purposes of instruction and correction (v. 14-18); bringing upon man suffering as a moral discipline (v. 19-22); in which case, if there be some one to teach the sufferer and lead his heart back to God, the best moral results follow, coupled with physical restoration as well (v. 23-30).

1. Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.

2. Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth.

3. My words *shall be of* the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.

4. The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

5. If thou canst answer me, set *thy words* in order before me, stand up.

In v. 3 Elihu says tersely: "My words are the uprightness of my heart;" I have only the best intentions and shall speak only my own heart.—"My lips shall utter knowledge *purely*"—better than "clearly"—his thought being not so much upon style as upon substance. What he had to say was pure truth, with no admixture of error. So the Psalmist used this word—"The commandment of the Lord is *pure*" (19: 8); "Thy word is very *pure*; therefore thy servant loveth it" (119: 140).—The reference in v. 4 to man's original creation as given in Gen. 2: 7, is beautifully in place here in connection with the devoted homage to truth in its purity which Elihu had just then professed. What could more befit an immortal, heaven-born soul than such love and devotion to truth in its purity! Did Elihu purposely intimate that he felt his responsibility *as a child of God by most direct parentage*, to search after and when found to speak the very truth of God without fear or favor, and (if so be might) for the spiritual good of his fellow-beings?—It deserves special notice that of the two verbs in v. 4, the first is in the perfect tense (a finished act); the second in the imperfect (the Hebrew future) for an act *not* finished but still continued—thus: The Spirit of God *hath made* me, giving me existence at my birth into being. The breath of the Almighty still gives and will give me life—this second verb, therefore, looking to God's sustaining hand, as the former, to God's originally creative power.—In the last clause of v. 5, there is no occasion to supply "words" which the English version puts in italics; for the sense is good without it:—"If thou art able, then answer me; set thyself before [against] me; take thy stand."

6. Behold, I *am* according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay.

7. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.

Two constructions of v. 6 have been proposed: (a) The first that of our English version:—I am God's vicegerent to debate and try this case with thee, for thou hast requested such an one;—(b) I am like thyself as toward God—a *mere creature*; I am formed of clay.—We shall remember that Job had passionately begged that he might have another than God—one human like himself—before whom his case might be tried. (See 9: 32, 34, 35 and 13: 21, 22).—The first construction (as above) is objectionable as being too bold and assuming to comport with Elihu's modesty and good sense. In a point so delicate he would be likely to suggest his relation to God in the matter indirectly rather than affirm it directly.—Again, the unusual phrase, translated "according to thy wish," means in Hebrew usage only—as *thou art*; like thyself. [The Hebrew student will find it in Ex. 16: 21 and Num. 6: 21 and 7: 5]. Moreover, the parallel clause—"I too was formed of clay"—should indicate the sense of the clause in question. For these reasons the second construction (b) is to be preferred.—Job had complained that God's majesty overwhelmed him; that his terror before the Almighty would appall and unfit him for the trial. But Elihu says—You need have no such terror before me.—In the second clause of v. 7 we should translate—not "my hand" but *my dignity*. There will be no such dignity or majesty in my presence as will oppress you heavily.

8. Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of *thy* words, *saying*,

9. I am clean without transgression, I *am* innocent; neither *is there* iniquity in me.

10. Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy;

11. He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.

Job had said things of God which would not bear scrutiny. Elihu brings some of them forward *as he understands them*. Perhaps his construction was in some respects rather stringent than liberal and charitable, but Job could not be justified. In the final issue God did not justify him, nor did Job by any means justify himself.—In v. 10, "occasions"—grounds of quarrel, as in 10: 6 and 14: 16—which passages however should scarcely be construed to mean more than a close scrutiny, a rigid investigation; and not necessarily that God sought occasion for a quarrel.

12. Behold, *in* this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.

13. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.

It deserves special notice and will receive attention again in the sequel, that Elihu does not rest God's claim on us for trust, submission and love, upon his goodness but upon his greatness and his absolute sovereignty. He did not say; We know that God is benevolent—too good ever to deal unjustly; nor did he say,—All our intuitions of God affirm that the Infinite One must be infinitely just to all his creatures. Not either of these grounds does he distinctly take; but he says—God is greater than man and gives no account of his ways. In the sequel we shall have occasion to notice that this is the position and doctrine not of Elihu only but of the whole book—the resting of the case as put ultimately by Jehovah himself. Hence the fact should be reserved for more distinct consideration in connection with the closing chapters.

14. For God speaketh once, yea twice, *yet man* perceiveth it not.

15. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;

16. Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction,

17. That he may withdraw man *from his* purpose, and hide pride from man.

But God *does* speak to mortal man for his instruction and correction, sometimes in dreams or visions—of which method Eliphaz had before spoken (4: 12–21). Beyond question this method of divine communication to man was not uncommon in the earlier ages. The Old Testament Scriptures give repeated instances.—In v. 14, the exact relation of the second clause to the first is left somewhat indefinite in the original. The verse taken literally runs—"For once, God will speak, and twice; one will not regard it"—which might supposably mean—*if* man does not regard the first speaking; or, *though* man regards it not; or, man *will* not see, or *does* not see, *i. e.*, is slow and dull of apprehension. Most probably the sense is, that God in great compassion and forbearance speaks the second time if the first time proves unavailing.—In dreams or visions he awakens thought and moves upon the sensibility so as thoroughly to open the ear of men and seal instruction to them, not in the sense of shutting it off, but of fastening it within and upon their mind. The object in view (v. 17) is to induce man to put away his wrong deeds and to save him from pride. "Hiding pride from man" seems to imply—taking from it its glare and fascination, forestalling thus its tempting power; withdrawing it from his admiring view.

18. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.

19. He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong *pain*.

20. So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.

21. His flesh is consumed away, that it can not be seen; and his bones *that* were not seen stick out.

22. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.

The purpose of God in these efforts to instruct man, and also the methods adopted for his correction, come to view here; viz., to save him (as in v. 18) from rushing upon his own destruction. For this end God chastens him with pain and disease; takes away his appetite for food and his flesh, and brings him near the grave. Elihu puts the supposed case in such terms as would suggest to Job his own.—In v. 18, the Hebrew gives us, not “sword” but *dart* or javelin, a weapon thrown by the hand.—In v. 19, not “the multitude of his bones,” but chastened with a *strife* of his bones continually—as if they were in a mutiny, an uprising, an utter unrest. By a change of vowel points we have really a different word in the text, which instead of emphasizing the *number* of his bones, puts stress upon their disturbance, commotion.

23. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness;

24. Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.

25. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth:

26. He shall pray unto God, and he will be favorable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.

Then if this sufferer under God's chastisement has some friend to interpret to him the kind designs of God in these inflictions, and if the sufferer is brought back to humble repentance, then the mercy of God comes to his relief. He is speedily restored to sound and youthful flesh. God hears his prayer once more and deals with him according to his present righteousness. Such is the general strain of this passage.—In v. 23, the Heb. word for “messenger” is the usual one for *angel*, yet manifestly refers to some human rather than superhuman messenger—one who stands in the counsels of God, comprehends his moral purposes, and is competent therefore to lead suffering men to right views of God's designs in their affliction. Such a spiritual guide (Elihu suggests) is a rare man, “one of a thousand.”—“To show unto man his uprightness” should not be taken here to mean—that this suffering man *is* upright, but rather, that he *may become so*—i. e., to show to man what is his *right way*. Or possibly it should refer

to *God* rather than to man;—to show this sufferer *God's* righteousness—his real goodness and his kind moral purpose in this affliction.—Such a messenger and interpreter of God's purposes, Elihu modestly suggests—am I to thee, O Job.—The words—"I have found a ransom," are truly remarkable, considering the very early date of this book. So early the grand idea of a *ransom for sinners*—a ground of possible pardon for the penitent—was before the minds of those most taught of God. Old Testament usage of this Hebrew word [copher] is uniform and decided, and therefore must fix its meaning. (See Ex. 21: 30 and 30: 12 and Num. 35: 31, 32 and Prov. 6: 35 and 13: 8 and 21: 18 and Isa. 43: 3 and Ps. 49: 7 and Job 36: 18.)

27. He looketh upon men, and *if any* say, I have sinned, and perverted *that which was* right, and it profited me not;

28. He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

29. Lo, all these *things* worketh God oftentimes with man,

30. To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.

In v. 27, the subject of the first verb should be the same as of the second, the Hebrew requiring this. Therefore we must make this subject man, not God, and read thus: He (this pardoned and restored man) will chant it before men (in his praise-song) and will say—"I have sinned and have perverted the right," etc. The verb which the Eng. version makes "looketh," by another punctuation means *sing*.—The last clause of v. 27 is interpreted somewhat variously. Prof. Conant is with our received version: "It availed me not;" this sinning life did not pay. Gesenius has it—It was not made even, or equal, to me; but Fuerst—"It was not recompensed to me righteously, according to my deserts;"—which in this connection should imply that God did not requite or render back, up to the full measure of his ill-desert, but either delayed or lessened the really righteous retribution for his sins.—This last is not only true, but is a precious truth, and by no means inappropriate at this point.—Oftimes God deals thus with men to save their souls from the pit of ruin and bring them back to the light and joy of a true life.

31. Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak.

32. If thou hast any thing to say, answer me; speak, for I desire to justify thee.

33. If not, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.

It was both kind and conciliating for Elihu to say, "I desire to justify thee." Nothing would please me better than to find thy cause a just one and to show it to be so. No prejudice shall blind

my eye to any thing which legitimately bears toward thy vindication.—In v. 33 “If not,” means—If thou hast not any thing to say, then listen to me.



CHAPTER XXXIV.

Elihu continues.

The pivotal thought of the chapter is put in v. 5: “Job hath said, I am righteous, and God hath taken away my judgment”—*i. e.*, my right; hath virtually denied to me the equity and fair dealing which was my right. These words of Job, Elihu condemns as not only rash but impious.

1. Furthermore Elihu answered and said,
2. Hear my words, O ye wise *men*; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.
3. For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat.
4. Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good.

In v. 4, the verb “*choose*” not only implies but emphasizes the preliminary investigation: Let us *examine* as preparatory to a wise decision upon what is right.

5. For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment.

6. Should I lie against my right? my wound *is* incurable without transgression.

Elihu referred (we may suppose) to what Job had said in 13: 18 and 16: 17 and 19: 6, 7 and 27: 2-6. In commenting upon these passages I have suggested the modifications which his words under the circumstances might perhaps bear. Yet it must be admitted that Job was less careful than he should have been to indicate these modifications himself. We can not say less than that he “spake unadvisedly with his lips,” his words and spirit lacking that humble reverence before God which so eminently befits a frail and sinning mortal. Elihu takes his words in their strongest sense, perhaps making them mean more than Job ever really intended.—I take v. 6 to mean—*Against* my own right, shall I speak falsely? *i. e.*, for the sake of justifying God, shall I ignore my own conscious innocence of the charges my friends bring against me and confess myself a vile hypocrite when I know I am not? Elihu may refer specially to Job’s words in 27: 4, 5.—Last clause of v. 6:—“My arrow” (that which sticks fast in me) is

fatal—from no sin of mine. Elihu charges that Job represents himself as shot unto death, not for any crime on his part which deserved death.

7. What man is like Job, *who* drinketh up scorning like water?

8. Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.

9. For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.

Scorning is more exact than “scorning,” scorn being properly of the heart, and scoff of the lip. Job’s *words* are thought of here. The figure used implies that Job scoffed as freely and copiously as a thirsty man drinks water.—Job’s words and doctrine, moreover, put him on the side of wicked men, in intimate sympathy with them, for he said what they love to say and hear. He had said—It is of no use to obey and please God—which is no less false and blasphemous than what wicked men are wont to say. Elihu’s mind may have been on Job’s words in 9: 22, 23: “He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.” Job had put the case as it seemed to him, viz., that God sends affliction on the good as on the bad—upon one who seeks and would please God, as upon one who does not:—a fact he could not explain; he could only affirm it to be so. He did not, however, put himself in heart and sympathy with wicked men, but again and again denied having such sympathy. See 21: 14–16 and 23: 11, 12 and 27: 7–13. “Far be the counsel of the wicked from me.” “My foot hath held his steps,” etc. “I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.” “Let my enemy be as the wicked,” etc. Elihu, therefore, (in this charge at least) was not only uncharitable but uncandid, not to say slanderous toward Job.

10. Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: far be it from God, *that he should do* wickedness; and *from* the Almighty, *that he should commit* iniquity.

11. For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to *his* ways.

12. Yea surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.

God turns with abhorrence from doing wickedness: let man forbear to cast on him such an imputation! Nothing could be to him a greater abomination! This seems to be the bottom thought of the Hebrew words.—God renders to man in pure justice according to his ways. This Elihu avers most explicitly and with the greatest solemnity.—Did he state this as an intuition—a thing that must be so by the necessity of God’s being; or as the result of his observation and experience as to the ways of God in the present world? The former apparently, rather than the latter.

13. Who has given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?

This thought is in place here to show how Elihu came to his strong conviction in respect to the inherent and necessary justice of God.—Who put the Almighty in charge over the earth as Moral Governor? or who gave order to the whole habitable world, *i. e.*, to the world considered as peopled by intelligent and moral beings? Is God acting a subordinate part, with only delegated power and right? If so, who is his Superior? Who is the really *Infinite, Supreme Being*?—But all our intuitions compel us to believe that the Great Underived, the sole and Supreme Monarch of all, *must be* above all temptation to injustice, indeed, to any and all evil—the infinitely pure and perfect One. Such, if fully drawn out, would seem to have been the reasoning of Elihu and the ground of his belief in God's infinite perfection.

14. If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath;

15. All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

Think of God's infinite power to take all life from the entire race of man! Were he to gather to himself that breath of life which at man's creation he imparted (Gen. 2: 7), how suddenly would all the living expire together! The doctrine seems to be that one who wields infinite, supreme power *must be perfectly just and good*. So Abraham;—"Shall not the *Judge of all the earth* do right"? (Gen. 18: 25). The reasoning does not seek strength from the recoil of human hearts from the opposite alternative—How unutterably dreadful if it could be otherwise—if the Supreme, with such resources of power were susceptible to malice and liable to do moral wrong! but it moves promptly and firmly to the conclusion—One so infinitely above all his creatures *must be* perfect in goodness, of pure and perfect justice.

16. If now *thou hast* understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words.

17. Shall even he that hateth right, govern? and wilt thou condemn him that is most just?

Elihu expands and elaborates this great and cardinal point. Is it even supposable that a hater of justice can rule the universe? Or, putting it in another form; Is it at all supposable that the Ruler of the universe can possibly be a hater of justice? And since our resistless intuitions give us these assured convictions, how shouldest thou dare condemn the All-just and the Almighty?

18. *Is it fit* to say to a king, *Thou art* wicked? and to princes, *Ye are* ungodly?

19. *How much less* to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all *are* the work of his hands.

Even on earth, all right-thinking men recognize the profound respect due to official rank and high authority, when worthily borne. Men count it treason to blaspheme the king and defame princes, especially when their character is stainless and their administration truly righteous—which is what Elihu adds in v. 18. We have no authority in the Hebrew for the words—"How much less to him," which imply that v. 19 describes another and a different personage from those of v. 18. The true construction is—"Shall one say to a king Belial (Heb.) "O thou bad!" and of princes—"O wicked one!" who (*i. e.*, when this very king, or this prince, is one who) regards not the person of princes and knows not the rich in the presence of the poor, for they are all the work of his hand. The inference tacitly suggested is—When such reproachful words are said of the Great King, whose character is spotless and his administration unblemished, what can be more impious?

20. In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.

21. For his eyes *are* upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.

22. *There is* no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.

The awful sweep of God's judgments, so sudden, so resistless—is the thought here, apparently designed to inspire a wholesome fear of his retributions.—It is but a moment and they die; "at midnight; whole peoples are smitten and pass away"—*smitten* rather than "troubled" meets the demands of the context. Even the mighty are taken away, yet by no visible hand. The unseen agencies of the Omnipotent do the work.

23. For he will not lay upon man more *than right*; that he should enter into judgment with God.

24. He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead.

In the first clause of v. 23, the English version has manifestly missed the sense of the Hebrew words. The Hebrew phrase, meaning to set the heart upon one ["heart" as the seat of *thought*] occurs somewhat frequently; *e. g.*, in full form chap. 1: 8 and 2: 3: with the word "heart" implied. in chap. 4: 20 and 23: 6; and with an analogous verb, in 7: 17. The sense here, therefore, is not—laying upon man *infections*, but setting upon man his *thought*. Then we have in the original a very important word* which is not represented at all in the English version. Its normal sense involves doing a thing *again*, over and over as in a circle, or round and round. Hence the meaning must be this: God will

not set his thought upon each man again and again that he may go before God in the judgment. He is not shut up to the slow processes of human courts—one man at a time; witnesses examined and re-examined; protracted arguments of counsel; long deliberations of the Judge:—but God moves with amazing rapidity: one flash of his eye, one touch of his infinite Mind gives him every element of the case in perfection.—This is the thought also in the next verse—which however is quite obscured in the English version. The original has it: He breaks in pieces the mighty with no long antecedent *searching*. *Search* and not “number,” is the sense of the Hebrew.

25. Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overturneth *them* in the night, so that they are destroyed.

26. He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others;

27. Because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways:

28. So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted.

29. When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth *his* face, who then can behold him? whether *it be done* against a nation, or against a man only:

30. That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.

The precise sense of the word for “Therefore” seems to be—*Because, inasmuch as*, God knows their works perfectly, he needs no appreciable time for inquiry or examination, but overwhelms them *in a night*; (not “*the*” night, but) in the lapse of a single night, the awful desolation is complete.—In v. 27, 28, turning back from following after God is supposed to develop into oppression of the poor which brings up their cry for redress before God—one who will always hear such cries!—Carrying out this thought yet farther, consider that God rules the world, caring for the defenseless, curbing his oppressors. When He gives rest, who shall condemn, bring in guilty? etc. When he hides his face, what eye can pierce through to gaze upon it, or to win its smiles?—This may apply to judgments upon a whole people, or upon a single individual—all the same, God’s ultimate aim being that corrupt men shall not bear rule, nor the people be ensnared.

31. Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend *any more*:

32. *That which* I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

Whatever may be said of any other advice given to the sufferer by Elihu, this is admirable. Nothing could be more appropriate for a sufferer to say unto God than this. And Job need have no

fear lest so much confession of sin as these words imply would be an admission of that great guilt of hypocrisy and that unmitigated iniquity which his friends, according to their doctrine, felt bound to charge upon him. We can readily understand that Job stood toward his friends in a very narrow, tight place, there being on the one hand the fitness of making honest confession to God of sins in the way of shortcomings, of which we must suppose he was consciously guilty; and on the other, the protest of his deepest consciousness against the kind and the measure of guilt which they laid to his charge.

33. *Should it be* according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest.

In this verse of somewhat complicated structure, it seems plain that the verb "requite" ["recompense"] belongs to the very first clause. We have no need or place for the verb "*be*," supplied without authority by our translators. Hence we may read thus: "Shall He [God] requite *at thy instance*, so that thou mayest refuse, or that thou thyself and not I, should choose? Then, what thou knowest, speak forth." The sense will be this: Canst thou expect that God will consult thee and be governed by *thy* choice rather than by his own wisdom in the recompenses of his providence toward thee?

34. Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me.

35. Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words *were* without wisdom.

36. My desire *is that* Job may be tried unto the end, because of *his* answers for wicked men.

37. For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth *his hands* among us, and multiplieth his words against God.

He invokes a thorough sifting of Job's words and of his attitude toward God. His answers [statements] had seemed to be in favor of wicked men, of such sort as would sustain them in their rebellion against God.—In v. 37, Elihu puts the case very strongly—far more strongly than Job's real feeling and true intent could justify. Elihu certainly was deficient in candor and sweet Christian charity.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Elihu continues.

Elihu opens this division of his long speech by naming two charges against Job: (a) that he claimed to be more righteous than God: (b) that he found no more profit in serving God than in sin. But he drops the first, having dwelt on that quite fully in the two previous chapters, and devotes this chapter to the second. His doctrine on this point will call for careful attention, viz., that God is so high above us that neither piety nor sin can have any commercial relations toward him, neither can become things of profit and loss as to God. One so great and high is not harmed by man's sin nor benefited by his righteousness. Hence if men are proud or vain, God can afford to disregard their cries unto him; while yet his favor is a priceless blessing to those who seek and find. Elihu seems to charge against Job that he had abused God's supreme independence as to his creatures and his apparent [or real] disregard of their doings, to the result of a most offensive vanity and of daring utterances against his Maker.

1. Elihu spake moreover, and said,
2. Thinkest thou this to be right, *that* thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?
3. For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? *and*, What profit shall I have, *if I be cleansed* from my sin?
4. I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee.

Passing the first charge with only this one appeal—Do you really *think it right* to say that your righteousness is more than God's? he proceeds to a second charge, viz., that he had said there is no profit in piety more than in sin. In the last clause of v. 3 the words of Elihu are closely rendered, thus: "What shall I gain more than by my sin"? That is—In the line of profit, what course pays better than sinning? What is the use of being righteous? Elihu had made the same charge before (34: 9): "He hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God." But this was pressing Job's words beyond his intent. Job had indeed said (9: 22), "This is one thing; therefore I said it: He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked." Also (10: 15): "If I be wicked, woe unto me: and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head." But for aught that appears, Job might have held (9: 22) that those cases were exceptional, anomalous, and not the uniform, established law of God's administration. The second passage above cited (10: 15) was evidently of words extorted from his lips by his own strange, astounding experience—this marvel of perplexity and mystery; and therefore in candor should not be taken as Job's statement of doctrine concerning God and his ways.

5. Look unto the heavens, and see ; and behold the clouds *which* are higher than thou.

6. If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him ? or *if* thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him ?

7. If thou be righteous, what givest thou him ? or what receiveth he of thine hand ?

God was thought of as enthroned above these lower heavens; far away therefore from this humble abode of mortals. Elihu's thought is that God is *so* high as to be entirely above possible harm from man's sin or benefit from his righteousness. Of which sentiment, this should be said—that on the one hand it sufficiently sweeps away the entire system of *commercial religion*—salvation by works profitable to God, or destruction because of mere personal damage done to him; while, on the other hand, it may be so pushed as quite to leave out of account God's infinite paternal love for his creatures; his interest in their welfare; his happiness in their obedience and love; and his displeasure toward their sin as ruinous to souls he has made to be blessed in his favor. It seems doubtful whether Elihu had yet reached those precious gospel views of the great love and condescension of the Infinite Father which Jesus taught so sweetly.

8. Thy wickedness *may hurt* a man as thou art; and thy righteousness *may profit* the son of man.

The Italic words supplied in this verse do not mislead, yet are scarcely necessary. For we may translate closely: Thy wickedness is towards or unto a man like thyself, and thy righteousness is unto a son of man—*i. e.*, bears upon man and upon man only—not upon God.

9. By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make *the oppressed* to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty.

10. But none saith, Where *is* God my maker, who giveth songs in the night:

11. Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?

The thought in v. 9 turns to show how thy wickedness may harm thy fellow-men, taking the form of oppression toward the weak and compelling them to cry out by reason of unendurable wrongs. Vs. 10, 11 suggest that even these afflicted, overborne sufferers were not wont to seek God their Maker who might give them songs in the depths of their darkness and calamity, and who kindly teaches his docile children more than he does the beasts of the earth, or the fowls of heaven. Perhaps his thought is that though ye can not profit the Infinite God by your piety or harm him by your wickedness, yet ye might find the richest consolation and joy in his favor and under his instruction. It is, however,

more natural to connect v. 10 closely with v. 9 (as above), and refer it to the case of men, oppressed by the cruel and the mighty, who might find great consolation in seeking their Maker.

12. There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men.

"There they cry," looks back to the last clause of v. 9—"They cry out" etc., and says more as to their case.—"None giveth answer"—would be more plain if put as it stands in the original—*and he answers not*—"he" referring to God.—Next we have the question to meet whether Elihu means that they *cry, because* of the pride of evil men, or that God *hears not, because* of this pride. The latter must be preferred, both because the *not hearing* is the nearest antecedent, and also because the next verse is on this subject. The verse therefore means that men, suffering oppression, cry out under it; but God answers them not, because they are too proud—*i. e.*, to humble themselves before him and seek his help.

13. Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.

14. Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, *yet* judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him.

The central idea in the Heb. word for "vanity" is *false*, lying, empty or void of truth. Applied to prayer it means insincere, dishonest. Such prayer God can not hear.—In v. 14 we must set aside the English translation as being wide of the sense, and translate—Much less when thou sayest that thou regardest not him. The Heb. verb *regard* is the same here as in the last clause of v. 13: God will not regard thee, thy prayer being vanity: much less will he when thou sayest, thou regardest not him. If the suppliant will not suitably regard God, God will not regard him.

—But such relations between God and the sinner are to the sinner utterly ruinous! Let him therefore consider—The cause is before Him [God, as the Great Judge]; wait thou in trust and hope for him. That is; Seek for his mercy before the trial of your case comes on!

15. But now, because *it is* not so, he hath visited in his anger; yet he knoweth *it* not in great extremity:

16. Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge.

The sense of v. 15 and its relation to v. 16 requires a better translation—thus: "But now because he [God] does not visit in his anger and does not scrutinize crime rigidly, therefore Job opens his mouth wide with vanity and multiplies words without knowledge." That is, God's great forbearance and long suffering Job abuses by indulging himself in untruthful allegations and in saying things of which he knows nothing.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Elihu still continues.

In this portion of his discourse Elihu magnifies the wisdom and also the power and majesty of God, making it his special point to show that God prospers the righteous; but if they fall into sin, sends upon them affliction for purposes of discipline and correction. It is their wisdom to receive such inflictions submissively and to turn humbly and in penitence to the Lord.

1. Elihu also proceeded, and said;
2. Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that *I have* yet to speak on God's behalf.
3. I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
4. For truly my words *shall* not be false: he that is perfect in knowledge *is* with thee.

.Wait for me yet a little longer (v. 2); "there are yet more words for God."—The clause (v. 4)—"One perfect in knowledge is before thee" (Heb.) apparently refers to himself. Was not this a bold, self-conceited assumption? Or shall we put it to the account of his strong conviction that he was sent and taught of God, especially when, as here, he was laboring to establish God's rights and vindicate his ways toward men? In support of this view, compare chap. 37: 16, where the same words are unquestionably applied to God. Elihu must have felt that they could be applied fitly to no other being.

5. Behold, God *is* mighty, and despiseth not *any*: he *is* mighty in strength *and* wisdom.

6. He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.

7. He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings *are they* on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.

In v. 5, the nicer shades of thought are better put thus: "Lo, God is mighty, yet he contemns not"—as one of such power might be tempted or presumed to do.—"Mighty is he in strength of understanding"—which extols his *power of mind*—not his power over matter.—"Preserveth not the life of the wicked" should rather be—He does not give them *life* in the highest and best sense of the word—real prosperity, true enjoyment. But he does award righteousness to the poor; literally—"The right of the suffering he will give."—"His eyes are evermore upon the righteous"—never withdrawn; and "with kings on the throne he

makes them sit forever, and they are exalted in honor." The doctrine is—Great prosperity and high honor to the righteous.

8. And if *they be* bound in fetters, *and* be holden in cords of affliction;

9. Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded.

10. He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.

11. If they obey and serve *him*, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.

12. But if they obey not they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.

If they find themselves involved in calamity, caught suddenly within its tight bands, it must be assumed that they have sinned, and that God is chastening them in discipline. "He shows them their work,"—their misdeeds, sins.—Not—"that they have exceeded"—but that *they have dealt proudly*—have been lifted up in pride. God labors to open their ear to his instruction and would turn them back from their sin. If they accept his counsel, all is well; their prosperity returns: if they refuse, they speedily perish.

13. But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them.

14. They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean.

The word translated "hypocrite," here as usually throughout this book, does not suggest a false pretender, one who wears a mask to deceive; but rather one who is bad at heart without reference to pretension. The rotten-hearted, the sin-loving who have no fear of God in their souls—these heap up wrath against themselves. When they become bound in the fetters of some great affliction (as in v. 8), they never cry to God in prayer for relief. Of course they die young. Their life goes out among the vilest, foulest of mortals.

15. He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.

16. Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait *into* a broad place, where *there is* no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table *should be* full of fatness.

V. 15 seems to be a general statement made to introduce the application of its doctrine to the case of Job, as in v. 16 and onward.—The point for critical inquiry turns on the words "*the poor*": Is he thought of simply as a *sufferer*, or is he also "*poor in spirit*"—not proud but humble? This is the same word we had in v. 6; "Giveth the right of the *poor*." Plainly this poor

one in affliction is *not* supposed to be in rebellion against God. Perhaps the true view is that *as a sufferer*, God has compassion on him and labors to open his ear to divine counsel and turn his heart to repentance.—The words—"in oppression" mean only—one in distress, not one guilty of oppressing others.—Applying this doctrine to Job, Elihu proceeds to say—"And thee, [O Job], he would allure from out of the jaws [mouth] of the straits, into a broad place, having no straitness underneath (or beyond) it; and the food on thy table should be full of fatness.

17. But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice take hold *on thee*.

18. Because *there is* wrath, *beware* lest he take thee away with *his* stroke: then a great ransom can not deliver thee.

19. Will he esteem thy riches? *no*, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.

The "judgment of the wicked" is here the mental judgments which they form, the counsels and ways of life they choose and follow. Elihu plays on the double sense of the word "fill." Instead of having a table *filled* with fatness, thou hast chosen to *fill* thy heart with the judgments of wicked men. Because thou hast done this, judgment and justice will lay hold upon thee—the same word, "judgment," being used here as in the first clause, with a play upon its two very diverse senses. Since thou hast filled thine heart with the vile *judgments* of wicked men, God will make his *judgments* of justice take hold of thee.—In the first clause of v. 18 our English misses the exact sense of the Hebrew, rendered "take thee away." I translate:—"Beware lest *resentment* excite thee against the chastising stroke. It is the same verb which in v. 16 might be rendered, *allure* in the good sense—draw, attract. As God labors to draw thee out of the straits into a broad place, so do thou beware lest anger [in the form of resentment] should stir thee up to resist his chastising hand. In Elihu's view, this was the case with Job—the great mistake of his life. Instead of yielding himself to be drawn, as God would fain have done, into penitence, and so, out of his strait place into a broad and blessed one, he had suffered his resentment to fire up against God's chastising rod. Of this Elihu begs him to beware because from this sin even a great ransom can not deliver. For such a sin no atonement can be found.—Dost thou imagine that great wealth can conciliate the Almighty? Elihu asks the question and leaves it to suggest its own answer.—In v. 19, instead of "No, not gold," the punctuation of the original gives us this reading of the verse:—Will he esteem thy riches—not in small amount—and all the resources of wealth?—How absurd to imagine that thy riches will conciliate his favor and buy the pardon of thy great sin!—Some excellent critics however read the verse essentially as in the English version—Will he esteem thy riches? Not even gold ore, nor all the resources of wealth.

20. Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.

The "night" of death is in mind here, for Job had repeatedly expressed his longing desire to die. (See 14: 13 and 3: 20-23). The last clause, putting the thought in briefest form, means this: *For the nations to go to the world below.* This is the outcome of that night of death.

21. Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.

One word of special exhortation:—Take heed; turn not unto [or toward] iniquity, for toward this hast thou turned rather than suffer affliction [patiently]. This, Elihu thought, had been the great mistake and sin of Job. Instead of bearing his sufferings submissively, he had allowed his heart to be turned toward complaints of God, even to the extent of charging him with injustice.

22. Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?

23. Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?

24. Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold.

25. Every man may see it; man may behold *it* afar off.

From this point onward Elihu extols the great power of God as manifested in the vapor, the rain, the storm, the clouds and lightnings of the sky. His aim seems to have been to inspire reverence and awe—qualities in which he supposed Job greatly deficient.—God exalteth—not others—but himself. He shows himself to be great and glorious. Who can teach as God does in these great works of his wisdom and power? Who is higher than He that he should direct Him *what* to do and *how*? Who can impute to Him aught of wrong? Remember that thou magnify his work which men fitly *celebrate in song*—this being the sense of the Hebrew, rather than "behold."

26. Behold, God *is* great, and we know *him* not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.

27. For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapor thereof.

28. Which the clouds do drop *and* distill upon man abundantly.

Here the wisdom and power of God are illustrated from the perpetual changes in the waters of our globe, passing by evaporation from the earth's surface into the atmosphere; then condensed and falling in showers—to rise again in the form of vapor. In v. 27 there is some difficulty in determining the precise sense of

the verb, growing out of our ignorance of the prevalent ideas of the age as to these processes of nature (or rather of God) in evaporation. It is scarcely admissible to shape our interpretation to meet the now well-known doctrines of modern science. And we know too little of the state of the most ancient science to avail ourselves of *its* light in our interpretation. The best critics mostly agree in putting vs. 27 and 28 thus: "For he draws up the water-drops (*i. e.*, by evaporation); they pour out (or as some make it, *purify*) the rain for his vapor, with which the skies flow down and distill upon man abundantly." If the sense *purify* be accepted, it refers to the fact that the most impure waters are purified by exhalation and fall again in perfect purity.—These processes by which a considerable portion of the waters of our globe are kept in constant circulation, evermore passing through changes supremely beneficent to man, have been in all ages the admiration of observing minds, being among the most obvious manifestations of God's wisdom and beneficence.

29. Also can *any* understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle?

30. Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea.

V. 29 refers to the phenomena of thunder ("the noise of his tent"), and hence, instead of "the spreadings of the clouds," we may better translate—the *bursting* of the clouds, for under the awful thunder's crash, they seem to burst asunder. The etymology of the Hebrew word admits this sense.—In v. 30 it is better to see a present God than a merely impersonal something ("it"), reading the verse thus:—Behold he spreads his light round about himself; he covers himself with the waters of the ocean's depths—literally, *with the roots of the sea*.—Dwelling in light unapproachable, yet veiling himself from human eyes behind the dark waters and thick clouds of the sky. We must bear in mind that the orientals thought of God's throne as above the lower heavens, and they also conceived immense masses of waters above the firmament as well as other masses below it, on the earth's surface. This firmament, according to Gen. 1, constituted a dividing wall, or rather a beaten out and solid expanse of firm matter which supported the superincumbent waters, but let them out from time to time through the windows of heaven—sluice-gates in the sky—through which waters rushed out to fill the clouds and make the showers.

31. For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance.

32. With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it *not to shine by the cloud* that cometh betwixt.

33. The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapor.

Beautifully, Elihu regards these agencies of God in the distribution of the waters of our world as shaped to the purposes of his moral government over men—supplying rain in abundance to fertilize the earth and provide food for man; or withholding it to visit guilty men with drouth and famine.—In v. 32 it were quite a vain endeavor either to justify our English version or to interpret it. But if we hold in mind the subject of thought—the phenomena of thunder—we may translate both intelligibly and forcibly:—He puts the light (*i. e.*, of the lightning's flash) as a covering over the palms of his hands and gives it a commission against the enemy.—Then v. 33, thus:—His thunder speaks [makes revelations] of him—to the herds of cattle even—of Him who is on high.—As to the last word, there is no authority for the sense “vapor.”



CHAPTER XXXVII.

Conclusion of Elihu's speech.

In its general course of thought, this chapter resumes, continues and fills out the theme which commenced 36 : 26, viz., the wisdom manifested by God in his agencies in our atmosphere—clouds, rain, storm, lightning, the ice of winter and the warmth of summer. Most appropriately these agencies are so presented as to inspire reverence and awe—moral impressions which Elihu assumes may be useful to his suffering but not sufficiently reverent friend.

1. At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place.

Following the thought with which the last chapter closed, the speaker says—Not the beasts of the field only give tokens of alarm before the approaching thunder-storm, but “my heart trembles and starts from its place:” thrilled with terror, it would fain spring away to hide itself from this august presence!

2. Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound *that* goeth out of his mouth.

3. He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth.

4. After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard.

5. God thundereth marvelously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we can not comprehend.

Pause, O Job, and listen attentively to the roar of Jehovah's voice when he speaks in the rolling thunder, shaping its course under the whole heaven, flashing its lightnings to the ends of the earth.—“He will not stay them when his voice is heard.” He detains not the lightnings but lets them fly when his voice of thunder goes abroad. Great things God works in earth and sky, far beyond our comprehension.

6. For he saith to the snow, Be thou *on* the earth : likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength.

7. He sealeth up the hand of every man ; that all men may know his work.

8. Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.

At his command come the snow, and both the gentle and the mighty rain. In those oriental countries, the distinction between the soft, mild shower and the pouring storm was strongly marked. The autumn rains began gently, swelling during winter to the great rain, and closing with the latter rain which again was moderate. God's hand shaped all these diversities of rain-fall in wisdom and in love.—The “sealing up of every man's hand,” is no other than the sealing up of the earth with the icy bands of winter, so that man is compelled to desist from his labors in the field—God's design in this being, in part, that man may have leisure to study and learn of God.—We should not read it—“that men may know his work,” but thus;—that the men of his work [workmanship] may know [him]. Men are definitely thought of as the work of God's hand, and therefore under most sacred obligation to know their Maker.—In this winter season, the beasts also in a similar manner retire to their dens and remain there.

9. Out of the south cometh the whirlwind : and cold out of the north.

10. By the breath of God frost is given : and the breadth of the waters is straitened.

From the south came the great whirlwinds of that climate. The south is called in Hebrew “God's secret chamber” because the southern hemisphere was little known.—God is seen every-where in all these agencies of nature ; the north winds which bring down cold and ice are *but his breath*.—The whole breadth of the rivers is bridged and held firmly as if *compressed*, by the ice.

11. Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud : he scattereth his bright cloud :

12. And it is turned round about by his counsels : that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.

13. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.

Not by "watering" in its usual sense—sprinkling water—but *with moisture, i. e.*, by supplying water freely, he loads [burdens] the thick clouds. He also spreads abroad his lightning cloud: it is made to turn this way and that by his guiding hand to do all he commands over the face of the whole world. He causes it to find [and execute] its work [Heb.], whether as a rod [of correction] upon his land, or for mercy [blessings].

14. Harken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.

15. Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?

At this point Elihu begs Job to pause for the practical application—Stand: Consider; wert thou in God's secret counsels when he set his thought upon these works in nature and sent forth the flash of his lightning-cloud?—If not, then admit that God's thoughts are deeper and more vast than thine!

16. Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?

17. How thy garments *are* warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south *wind*?

18. Hast thou with him spread out the sky, *which is* strong, and as a molten looking-glass?

The same idea as above;—Hast thou been one of God's privy counsel so that thou hast understood how to weigh the clouds so nicely that they are just sustained in the atmosphere and made equal to their great burden of water? Dost thou comprehend the wonders of him whose knowledge is really perfect?—"Quieteth the earth by his south wind"—distinguished for blowing gently and bringing in the warm, balmy breath of summer. Wast thou *with Him* as counsellor or helper when He spread out the concave firmament—supposed in that age to be solid, firm, as a mirror of polished brass?

19. Teach us what we shall say unto him; *for* we can not order *our speech* by reason of darkness.

20. Shall it be told him that I speak? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.

Perhaps to give Job a sharper sense of the absurdity of the assumption which the question (above) suggests, Elihu would say;—If thou hast indeed been in the privy council of the Most High, then teach us what we shall say to him; for we—only common men—are in great darkness on this point.—But pause and think! Shall it be said unto the Great God—*I would speak unto thee*? Shall a man speak [*i. e.*, to God] that he may be swallowed up?

or, when he surely will be? Elihu remembers those impassioned words of Job (23: 3-7) —“O that I knew where I might find Him! I would order my cause before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words he would answer me,” etc. Elihu would suggest to Job that such bold irreverence might be fatal.—The last clause of v. 20, as well as the first should be interrogative. In the Hebrew they are definitely correlated:—Is it this way, or is it that?

21. And now *men* see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.

Even now men can not gaze on the sun when its light shines brightly in the sky—when the wind has passed over and cleared the atmosphere. Inference: If men can not gaze upon the open, unobscured face of the sun in the heavens, how can they endure the blazing glory of the face of God, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see (1 Tim. 6: 16).

22. Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty.

23. *Touching* the Almighty, we can not find him out: *he* is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.

24. Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any *that are* wise of heart.

The Heb. word translated “fair weather” is the usual term for *gold*. Critics are sharply divided between these two senses: (a) A golden sky of clear, brilliant light, coming forth from the northern regions:—(b) Gold itself as found in northern latitudes. The latter construction would be taken to suggest that though men go deep for gold and bring it up with immense labor, yet they fail to find *God*. But this fact, though not bad in its place, (as *e. g.*, in chap. 28) is here far-fetched, and entirely foreign from the course of thought. The former construction seems therefore to be preferable.—The great thought here is that God’s majesty is all-glorious, and should inspire most reverent awe. His ways, moreover, are deep—as to us, past finding out. Exalted is he in power and in equity (“judgment”); abundant in righteousness; one who will never oppress. Therefore sensible men *do*, and all men *should* fear him. On the other hand, “he regards not the wise of heart”—said here of those who are wise only in their own esteem. Men who are vain of their wisdom (perhaps he meant this for a suggestion to Job) find no special favor before God. Reverent awe before his glorious majesty, and a due recognition of his spotless righteousness and justice, would be incomparably more appropriate.

Thus ends the long speech of Elihu, remarkable both for what it says and for what it omits to say. Of what it says, we have

already observed that it brings out in strong light—perhaps sometimes too strong—the objectionable things Job had said as to his own righteousness and God's severe bearing toward him. Considering how Elihu understood Job, he met these objectionable points admirably in view of the light he had in regard to God's character and ways. Nobly has he set forth the majesty and glory of God as seen in his great works in the visible heavens above us—the phenomena of cloud, rain, lightning, and storm. Most truthfully and in plainest terms has he testified to the perfect rectitude and justice of God in his dealings with men. On the great problem of suffering, as falling upon good men, he has said little if estimated in the light of its importance to the issue then pending; yet he has intimated his belief that such sufferings are disciplinary and corrective, and that, if they accomplish the end sought and bring the sufferer to humble resignation and true repentance, God will surely turn his hand promptly from the infliction of suffering to the bestowal of blessings. Beyond this, Elihu has not attempted to fathom the mysteries of God's administration in the sufferings of good men. He had not fully reached the great doctrine that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and that he is certainly and perfectly benevolent, even in the pitying tenderness of a father to his children, as truly in the pains he leaves the good to suffer as in the joys he gives them. This doctrine in its full development came at a later age with the advent of new and better light from the Great Father of light, in harmony with the general law of progress in the revelation of God to men.

The entire speech of Elihu being now before us, it is in place here to inquire:

I. What *main points* he has made in these six chapters, and what is to be thought of their bearing upon the important issues of this controversy; and,

II. What may we infer as to their influence upon Job and their approval or otherwise by the Lord?

I. What main points has Elihu made in this speech?

1. As we have seen, he has rebuked Job—(1) For saying, or at least implying, that himself was more righteous than God—(2) For teaching that piety availed nothing before God; brought no more profit than impiety—a doctrine (Elihu maintains) which wicked men love and live upon; that therefore Job was playing into their hands and really taking ground against God and against real piety—(3) In general, for irreverence toward God and for impious presumption. All these points have been treated in our notes sufficiently.

2. As already shown, Elihu maintained the doctrine that the sufferings of the good are, at least, often disciplinary, and considered in view of the divine purpose in their permission, corrective; and that if successful to this result, God forgives the sin and restores the sinner, now humbled and penitent, to favor and to his former prosperity. This was a long step in advance toward the true doctrine.

3. He also labored to impress Job with a sense of God's majesty, power and wisdom in his works of creation and also of providence, especially in his physical administration over his material universe. His aim was to deepen Job's reverence and awe toward God—an aim worthy of the best of men and of their best endeavors. It may be observed that this aim was in full harmony with that of Jehovah himself, who took up the effort at the point where Elihu suspended it, and made it his main, not to say exclusive, aim throughout his speech.

II. On the two questions—Did this speech have any effect upon Job? and, Did the Lord indorse it? we are met in the outset by the fact that the record has no definite statements bearing on either of these points. Job made no reply; said not a word from which we can infer how the speech impressed him. The Lord made not the slightest allusion to Elihu, and hence gave no direct expression of his thought as to the speech.—Must we then infer that probably his speech had no appreciable influence and turned to no valuable account? That it neither impressed Job to good purpose nor pleased the Almighty and won his approbation?—Some critics are understood to maintain the affirmative on both these points, and on this ground question, or deny, the claims of his speech to a place in this book.

In defense of these claims it should be said—(a) That on the score of textual authority, the speech of Elihu is here by as good right as any thing else in the book.—(b) That it actually fills a useful place in the discussion, administering deserved rebuke to Job, criticising justly the notable failure of Job's three friends, and moving upon Job entirely in the line of thought and argument which the Lord himself immediately takes up at the close of his speech and carries forward till Job is broken, humbled, penitent, forgiven, and accepted before God.—On the main question therefore now in hand, viz., The results of this speech and the reasons why Job makes no reply and the Lord no allusions to it, I come to these three conclusions:

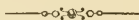
1. That as an answer to Job on the human side, *i. e.*, from a fellow-being, from a man unprejudiced and in the main fair-minded, it was *useful to Job* and *acceptable to God*.

2. That Job made no answer—(a) Because he felt in a good measure the truth and justice of what Elihu had said;—(b) Because he had nothing to say by way of objection or of self-vindication.—(c) Perhaps also because the Lord began at the very point both of time and of thought where Elihu closed, taking up the same line of argument which Elihu had been pressing, and with no interval of unoccupied time.

3. Further, Elihu's speech did make progress in the general argument, and so far as appears, helped toward the immediate result of bringing Job to a better mind.

4. The reasons why the Lord made no allusion to Elihu may have been such as these: (1) What Elihu had said did not need his formal indorsement:—(2) It was a sufficient though indirect

indorsement that the Lord took up the very point with which Elihu closed and pursued it throughout his own entire speech, laboring to impress Job with a sense of God's ineffable majesty, greatness and glory, his wisdom also and perfect ability to manage the universe he had made in all its minutest details, and to the wisest and best possible results.—(3) It was not befitting the dignity and majesty of God that he should formally recognize Elihu *as an umpire* in this debate, especially in a case in which he condescended to become the umpire himself.—(4) Inasmuch as the Lord expressed very explicitly his disapprobation of what Job's three friends had said, and indirectly showed wherein he held Job to have been in the wrong, it is reasonable to assume that if he had disapproved the speech of Elihu, he would have said so. Coupled with this, the fact that he resumed Elihu's closing argument and carried it forward himself, should be accepted as his sufficient indorsement.



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Lord himself appears and speaks.

The human speakers in this long discussion have closed at last and are silent. The way is open for the final word; and now the Lord appears in a whirlwind and addresses Job with sublimity and grandeur never surpassed in human speech. Job had rashly assumed to know how the Almighty *ought* to govern the world and administer its agencies of good or evil over the righteous and the wicked. For this rash assumption he deserved the sternest rebuke. This is therefore the first and main point in this sublime speech of Jehovah.—True, Job had made no pretensions to special knowledge or wisdom as to creating the world or ordaining its physical laws, nor need we understand the Lord to assume that he has. But he *might as well have assumed* to know all about this material world and its ordinances as to have made the analogous assumption in respect to God's moral administration. This fact suggests the logic of the speech before us. Underneath it lies the great truth that it requires no less wisdom to govern a world of moral agents on probation than to create a material universe and ordain its physical laws. Unquestionably the fact is that the *moral* universe as compared with the *physical* demands and calls into exercise incomparably greater wisdom and power. Now Job had boldly assumed to pass his judgment upon the moral administration of the Most High. To answer him, the Lord puts it to him to say where he was when the Great Creator spake this material world into being and ordained its laws and

put in motion the wonderful mechanism of suns and planets; of rivers and ocean depths, of light and heat, of summer and winter—of all the agencies wise and beneficent for the good of man. Throughout this protracted appeal the underlying implication is of this sort: If thou art not old enough, nor wise enough, nor mighty enough, to do these lesser things, how couldst thou assume to be equal to the greater task of governing intelligent and moral beings under a scheme of moral probation?—It might perhaps be added that, while human thought is dull and shallow in the just appreciation of the infinitely delicate and difficult management of free acting moral agents, it is comparatively more easy to impress upon men the glorious sublimity and majesty of God, as well as his wisdom and power also, by bringing forth to his view the more tangible and apprehensible manifestations of God in the world of matter. So it often is that God puts infant minds at school in the realm of matter to train them into the higher and more difficult lessons in the realm of mind and morals.

1. Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

2. Who *is* this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

3. Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee: and answer thou me.

Nothing can surpass the sublime dignity or the telling force of the first words; "*Who is this*"? this creature of a day; this being so infinitesimally small, so very weak, of so little knowledge! Who is he that thus sheds darkness and not light over the momentous questions involved in governing the universe? Who is this that makes such a display of words, with no knowledge therein?—"Gird up now thy loins like a man"—for there is earnest work to be done, and the utmost manly energy will be called into requisition.—The word chosen here for *man* is not that one which suggests his earth-born origin [Adam], nor that which specially distinguishes his sex as compared with woman [ish]; but is the one which suggests the *hero*—the man of masterly vigor and power—the very embodiment of manliness.—I will demand of thee, and *inform* thou me; *make me know* in answer to the inquiries I put. The word "answer" comes short of the full sense.

4. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

5. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

6. Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner-stone thereof?

7. When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

As we ought to expect, the building and construction of this material globe are expressed in correspondence with the current ideas of the age. A use of terms and forms of statement more scientifically accurate (according to modern science), it were simply folly in us to demand. The effect sought in this speech was not instruction in physical science but a sublime *moral* impression.—The observant reader will notice that both the phraseology and the conception in this chapter are entirely in harmony with Genesis—as if the same Moses wrote both.—“Where wast thou”? The great Creator saw nothing of thee; where couldst thou have been on that august morning of earth’s creation?—Who made the measurements (v. 5) for this stupendous building?—Not “*if* thou knowest,” but “*for* thou wilt know”—this being the normal, not to say necessary sense of the Hebrew words. The verb is in the Hebrew future tense which admits some latitude of meaning—*e. g.*, Thou *shouldest* know; *shouldest* be expected to know since thou hast assumed to sit in judgment on God’s moral administration;—*oughtest* to know in order to justify such assumptions. There may perhaps be a slight tinge of irony—against which there can be no valid objection.—Instead of “*hath* laid” and “*hath* stretched,” the simple *imperfect* tense “who laid”—“who stretched”—would be better, the reference being to acts finished in that birth-hour of creation.—Upon what were its massive foundations *sunken* (this being the sense of the Hebrew word).—“The morning stars” (v. 7) are synonymous and parallel with “the sons of God,” both phrases referring to angelic orders of being in existence before our world was made. The word “star” in the sense of one eminently distinguished, was in use among the Hebrews, as we may see in Num. 24: 17—“There shall come a star out of Jacob,” etc.—also Rev. 22: 16—“I am the bright and the morning star.” Of analogous sort is Isa. 14: 12.—It was a pertinent question to ask how it happened that in the sublime chorus of joy when the welkin of the upper heavens rang with hallelujahs of praise to the great Creator of this lower world, *Job was not there!* Where was he then? What could he have been doing that he should miss this stupendous gathering? What could have engrossed his attention, of sublimer, vaster moment, than this praise-song of the morning ages!

We scarcely need say that the conception of such a song is itself sublimely grand, and no doubt gloriously true! Ah, did they foresee what was to transpire upon this beautiful earth ere its final conflagration? Had any whisper ran through their shining ranks that a race of younger brethren were to be planted there; that sin would enter the Eden of its beauty and doom this brother race to the ruin of death; that the Son of God would become incarnate for their redemption; and that in the end a world redeemed would swell the chorus of heaven with its “new song” forever and forever?—Of only one thing we may be sure, *viz.*, that if their angelic song were not inspired in any measure by prophecy, it was the more surely inspired by *faith*—a faith that

the Great Creator had some far-reaching plan and grand results in his unfathomable thought. The moral sublimity of such faith, it is elevating and glorious to contemplate.

8. Or *who* shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, *as if* it had issued out of the womb?

9. When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it,

10. And brake up for it my decreed *place*, and set bars and doors,

11. And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further : and here shall thy proud waves be stayed ?

Next, the production and disposal of the great waters of our globe, thought of as a birth from the womb of creation ; then like an infantchild, wrapped in swathing-bands of cloud ; then assigned to its place and rigidly circumscribed within bounds which it must not pass over.—In v. 9, for “thick darkness,” read *thick cloud*, which is precisely the etymological sense of the original. —In v. 10, the English version is wide of the true sense, which is ; And then *I assigned my bounds to it*. The Hebrew words have primary application to the head of a household *breaking off to every one his portion of bread*, from which came the broader sense of marking off due bounds or limits—here to the great waters of the deep.

12. Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days ; and caused the day-spring to know his place ;

13. That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it ?

Not to press farther the question what thou hast known or done, of that which took place long ages before thou wert born ; let me ask now what thou hast done as to certain things “*since thy days*” [began] ? Since thy birth into this glorious world, hast thou, day by day, commanded the morning to come on and made the day-spring know its place, that it might grasp the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken [with fear], and driven out of it—*i. e.*, driven from their usual works of darkness ? The reader will find a clue to the meaning of this in 24 : 16, 17. Wicked men work their deeds in the darkness and flee in terror from the approach of day. The morning dawn therefore “shakes them out” of the active business world in which they move.

14. It is turned as clay to the seal ; and they stand as a garment.

15. And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.

The face of the earth is changed, under the rising light of the

sun, as clay when impressed by the signet-ring. Its mass which under the darkness had seemed shapeless and void of beauty, suddenly under the sunlight puts on all forms of beauty, even as the shapeless clay-lump takes the nice impressions of the signet. Then all earth's beauty stands forth as in gay apparel; or perhaps the whole idea may be, its beauties are all before you, apparent as one's outer garment.—V. 15 reiterates the sentiment of v. 13. As to the wicked, *their* light is the darkness; their day of work is the night. When darkness is withholden from them, being dispelled by the glorious sun, their high arm is broken, their power for evil gone.

16. Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?

17. Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

Has Job pushed his travels and researches into the depths of the sea, and down to the gates of the under-world?—The sea is supposed to be fed by springs at its bottom: Has Job been down to explore them? or has he traversed the unexplored depths of the ocean?—*traversed*, walking to and fro, is the sense of the Hebrew. —Instead of saying—"In the *search*," it should be—In the realms never yet searched, or the places that will forever remain to be explored.—Moreover, hast thou been down to the very gates of the deep world below, and were those gates opened to admit thee? Hast thou even seen those gates of death-shade?

18. Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.

19. Where *is* the way *where* light dwelleth? and *as for* darkness, where *is* the place thereof,

20. That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths *to* the house thereof?

21. Knowest thou *it*, because thou wast then born? or *because* the number of thy days *is* great?

As to the earth's surface, hast thou explored it to its uttermost breadth? Declare if thou knowest all this! The abode of light and the home of the darkness—hast thou been there and found their local habitation and learned how to conduct them to their respective homes and to bring them forth in their appointed times?—In v. 21 the Hebrew gives no sign of a question. The affirmative construction is therefore true to the original: "Thou knowest—(certainly!) for thou wast then already born, and the number of thy years is great!" Irony of course; but a forcible way of putting home to Job's mind the folly of his daring assumption.

22. Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,

23. Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?

According to the conceptions current in all classic and oriental literature, snow and hail are thought of as deposited in vast store-houses, treasured for use upon call from their Infinite Maker; here said to be reserved in store for the day of battle and war, when God goes forth against his enemies.

24. By what way is the light parted, *which* scattereth the east wind upon the earth?

25. Who hath divided a water course for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder;

26. To cause it to rain on the earth, *where* no man is; on the wilderness, where *there is* no man;

27. To satisfy the desolate and waste *ground*; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?

In v. 24, the sense is not—"By what way [manner] is the light parted; but what is the way to the place whence light comes forth? The same question is asked as to the point from which the east wind is sent abroad over the earth. The idea is not by any means that the light scatters the east wind.—Who lays out the channels for the rain or the track for the thunder's flash? Who does that wonderful thing—send rain upon unpeopled deserts, where no mortal lives to be blessed thereby?

28. Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?

29. Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?

30. The waters are hid as *with* a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.

Where is the limit to these wonders of the material universe? Think:—How came the rain and the dew to exist at all? Who gave them birth? Had they a father?—The phenomena of *ice* are among the marvels of the water system, noticed in v. 30. The sense however is not—tied as *with* a stone; but hidden as *in* stone—*i. e.*, as if *converted into stone*.—And the face of the deep *coheres*, the waters elapsing hands (so to speak) together; the particles grasping each other—literally, *are seized* and held fast.

31. Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?

The Pleiades are the well known constellation, otherwise called "the seven stars." Orion, drawn as a giant on the sky with girdle about his loins, is also among the best known constellations. Anciently, the former appeared in spring; the latter in winter. Whether the stars themselves were thought of as controlling the

climate, bringing on the warmth of spring and the cold of winter; or were regarded as merely *indicating* the seasons because they appeared at the time of their change, and their appearance therefore came to be associated with spring or with winter, it is neither easy nor important to decide. Whichever may have been the current notion in the day and country of Job, we need find here no scriptural authority for the doctrines of astrology. In fact, spring came with the advent of the Pleiades; winter with the appearance of Orion. Hence the Lord fitly asked Job—Dost thou (not literally "*canst*") but dost thou in fact bind in clusters together those stars of the Pleiades? or dost thou unbind the stars in the girdle of Orion, loosing his girdle? That is; Art thou the author of those beneficent changes of the seasons from winter to spring which shed such blessings abroad over the face of the earth?—As to the precise sense of the Hebrew word translated "sweet influences;" if taken as it stands in the text, its etymological meaning is—*delights*; sweet and precious things: but if its two final letters should be transposed—(a change not altogether infrequent in Hebrew words), we have the sense *bands*, which corresponds with "binding" and "loosing," and keeps up the antithesis between these two constellations.

32. Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?

"Mazzaroth"—a Hebrew word transferred (not translated), is a plural noun and means *the signs of the Zodiac*: the twelve stars which marked off the entire Zodiac into twelve equal portions through which the sun (apparently) passes in the corresponding twelve months of the year.—"Arcturus" is the well known northern constellation, otherwise called "the Great Bear" ("Dipper"); "his sons" (special stars) being poetically the children of that animal. The question as put to Job asks if *he* controls these movements of the great constellations, or as we should put it, those changes of the earth in its revolution round the sun which they serve to mark and indicate?

33. Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?

34. Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?

35. Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we *are*?

Dost thou even *understand* the ordinances of the heavens—those great natural laws under which the heavenly bodies move in their orbits and fulfill each his own mission? Or dost thou assign to them their dominion over the earth, giving them the power they wield and regulating its exercise?—So also, dost thou command the clouds, and consequently abundance of waters come down to cover thee? Or, in like manner, dost thou send forth the light-

nings, and they respond to thy bidding as thy ready servants?—questions as to which we scarcely know whether most to admire their exquisite pertinence, or their matchless sublimity.

36. Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?

This question opens a new vein of thought—the resources of power and wisdom manifested in Him who can create *intelligent mind*, like that of man—a mind capable of learning and appreciating the glorious attributes of his Maker and Father. Who has wrought this wonderful achievement? Has Job ever done any thing of this sort? If not, then he is entirely too fast in presuming to say how the Infinite Maker of man's intelligent mind ought to govern his moral children and adjust to their spiritual nature and need the complicated influences of adversity and prosperity.

37. Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven,

38. When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?

"Numbering the clouds" probably includes more than their *count*, even a perfect knowledge of their laws and a supreme control of all their agencies.—Not "*stay* the bottles of heaven" in the sense of holding them still; but rather—Who can *incline* them; turn them up so that they shall discharge their waters in showers upon the earth. The time, thought of, is one of extreme drought, when the soil becomes hard and the clods cohere and can not be pulverized. Who then can send the softening showers?

39. Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions,

40. When they couch in *their* dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait?

41. Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

At this point the field from which illustrations are drawn changes and a new chapter should have commenced. The strain of discourse passes from the inanimate creation to the animate; from the heavenly bodies and atmospheric agencies to beasts of field and forest, of land and of water; to treat of their instincts, and capabilities, and of the provision which their great Creator has made for their subsistence and well-being. This portion of the discourse will have less of sublimity and grandeur than the preceding, yet, carefully considered, scarcely less rich displays of the wisdom and beneficence of the Creator.

The lion, notwithstanding his wonderful strength and agility, must still depend on the all-pervasive providence of his Maker for his daily food. Noticeably the case of the lion is put in two aspects: the young, hungry and to be supplied; yet waiting idly

in their dens: the old lion, responsible for the hunting, and crouching in his covert to lie in wait. V. 39 names the old lion first; his young second: while v. 40 reverses this order, and shows the young waiting in their homes; the old, lurking for his prey. Who shaped these laws and provides for their well-working?—Beautifully the young of the raven are thought of as lifting up their cry to God for the food which their nature demands, and God hears their cry!—Does Job bear any part in this universal providence of God? Could he do it if the responsibility were laid upon him?—Moreover, let the question be considered whether the Lord does not invite Job (and ourselves also) to this inference:—He who hears the cry of the raven will hear the cry of his human offspring: He who is good to the lion is no less good to suffering man. Subsequent sacred writers seem to have had in mind this allusion to the raven; *e. g.*, the Psalmist (147: 9): “He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.” Also our Lord himself (Luke 12: 24): “Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; who have neither store-house nor barn; and God feedeth them.”



CHAPTER XXXIX.

Speech of Jehovah continued.

This chapter brings under consideration successively the rock-goat (v. 1-4); the wild ass (v. 5-8); the unicorn (v. 9-12); the ostrich (v. 13-18); the war-horse (v. 19-25); the hawk (v. 26); and the eagle (v. 27-30). The purpose in each is essentially the same—to set forth the surpassing wisdom and beneficence of the Great Creator, whose works in the field of animated existence are endlessly varied, but every-where rich in demonstrations of his measureless resources of skill, adaptation and beneficent providence.

1. Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? *or* canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?

2. Canst thou number the months *that* they fulfill? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?

3. They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows.

4. Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them.

Instead of “*canst* mark;” “*canst* number,” *dost* should be the word, as precisely representing the original. In v. 2 the idea is

by no means—*canst* thou *count* their months—which would be no difficult matter, but *dost* thou *determine*, fix, this period—a thing done by no other than their Creator. “Cast out their sorrows”¹⁷ in the sense of casting away, dismissing, their pains. Their young (v, 4) mature, develop rapidly to the point of puberty.—They grow up, not “*with corn*,” but *in* the open fields—the wide, desert regions. This “goat of the rock” [Heb.] is the wild one—in habits and life, entirely unlike his tame brother. Who made him to differ so widely? Who supplies his physical wants and bears him with such facility through the trying exigencies of all animated beings?

5. Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?

6. Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings.

7. He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.

8. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.

This description of the wild ass has its eye continually upon his tame brother, to show the points of great unlikeness in his spirit and habits of life.—Who sent forth this wild ass *free* as a manumitted slave—the word here being the one employed for the bondman set at liberty. Who loosed his bands of slavery—to whom I have given the broad wilderness for his home? “He scorneth”—not properly “the *multitude*,” but the *tumult*—the hum and roar of the city. He does not like those sounds which come up from the busy haunts of men, nor will he hear [patiently] the shouts of the driver—such as the domesticated ass is doomed to hear interminably.—The range of the mountains is his pasture-ground—the word for *range* implying a country to be traversed and explored at will, where he may search out every green thing for his subsistence. Who gave this animal his fixed instincts of freedom, and provided for him a home so peculiar, a pasture-ground so ample, the supply for every want so abundant; and made him love this sort of life so well and persist in it so tenaciously? Had Job any hand in all this?

9. Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?

10. Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?

11. Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labor to him?

12. Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather *it into* thy barn?

Both naturalists and Bible critics have sought long and dili-

gently to identify this so-called "unicorn" [Heb. *reem*]. The descriptive points given here suffice to show fully his strong points of resemblance in structure and strength to the domestic ox. He might plow or harrow or bear your burdens of grain—if only he would; but like the two animals before described, he is intractable. You can not bow his neck to your yoke, nor make him feel at home at your crib. *Wild ox* is therefore his descriptive name.—The supposition that he had but one horn ["unicorn"] is for many reasons untenable. See the allusions to his *horns* [plural] in Ps. 22: 21 and 92: 10 and Deut. 33: 17.—The earlier critics labored to make him out the rhinoceros; but all later critics reject their speculations. The effort to class him with the oryx has proved equally abortive. If his race is still extant, he must be a species of the buffalo, now domesticated in Southern Europe, Egypt and India.*

13. *Gavest thou* the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?

14. Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust,

15. And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.

16. She is hardened against her young ones, as though *they were* not hers: her labor is in vain without fear;

17. Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.

18. What time she lifteth up herself on high she scorneth the horse and his rider.

In this passage the Hebrew gives no authority whatever for the word "peacock." The bird described is the ostrich and no other. Therefore, read vs. 13 and 14 thus:—"The wing of the ostrich waves exultingly; but are her wings and pinions pious" (like the affectionate *stork* suggested by the word for "pious")? [Nay,] "*for* she commits her eggs to the earth, and on the dust [or sand] leaves them to be warmed and forgets that some foot may crush them. By her instincts she is hard of heart toward her young; God has withheld from her the maternal love and care impressed into the nature of most animals. Her unsurpassed speed in flight is given truthfully as another of her marked characteristics. Combining nimble feet with powerful wings, she easily distances and proudly scorns the horse and his rider. Her hunters find that it is only by driving the ostrich against the wind that they can break her down and bring her within their reach.—The reader will notice here also that the striking peculiarities of this wonderful bird are attributed to her Maker, who is "wonderful in counsel."

* Robinson in Calmet gives an elaborate review of this subject.

19. Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?

20. Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible.

21. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in *his* strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.

22. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.

23. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.

24. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that *it is* the sound of the trumpet.

25. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha! and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

This is not the average horse of civilized life, put to burdens and to draft: but the genuine *war-horse*—nowhere else developed so perfectly as on the Arabian deserts.—In v. 19—not “clothed his neck with *thunder*, but with *terror*—in allusion to his waving, streaming, tremulous mane—one of the significant marks of his fearless spirit and rampant enthusiasm for battle.—In v. 20, “the glory of his nostrils” is not for the eye (as the English reader might suppose), but for the ear—the snorting, exploding his breath through the nostrils.—In v. 24, the phrase—more oriental and Arabic than occidental—“he swallows the ground in his fierceness and rage”—sets forth the fury of his charge in his eagerness for the shock of battle. So excited is he that he can scarcely believe his own ears when the blast of the war-trumpet stirs his blood to frenzy. Who gave him this passion for the scenes and apparently for the glory of battle?

26. Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, *and* stretch her wings toward the south?

27. Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?

28. She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.

29. From thence she seeketh the prey, *and* her eyes behold afar off.

30. Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain *are*, there is she.

From land animals we pass now to birds. First, the hawk, one of the birds of passage. As the cold of winter approaches, he mounts high aloft and spreads his wings for the warmer regions of the south. Does this sagacity come of thy wisdom? Art thou equal to the creation of such instincts?—And of the eagle:

Dost thou nerve and inspire her for her lofty soaring, and make her at home on the highest peaks and crags of the mountain-top? Hast thou given her that marvelously long range of vision by which she descries her food from afar? Is it of thee that she makes her feast upon the flesh and blood of the slain?

Throughout these two magnificent chapters, we know not which to admire most, the sublime grandeur of the thought, or the surpassing beauty of the diction. If we ascribe the style to the genius and imagination of the author, we shall readily concede to him the very first rank in these grand qualities. If we assume that in fact Jehovah did appear in the whirlwind and give audible utterance to these thoughts in substantially these words, we can not say less than that the argument is worthy of a God, and the reported words do highest honor to the sublime source whence they came.



CHAPTER XL.

Jehovah's speech resumed and continued.

The first striking feature of this chapter is that it appears like a new speech, or at least, a second distinct part of the same; for it has its appropriate introduction, corresponding to that in chap. 38. Was this because Job had become inattentive—his mind apparently flagging and therefore needing a new impulse to hold its thought? Or was it that some new points were to be introduced or old ones put in new aspects for the stronger impression? The latter view has some support in the points made at the opening of this new speech.

The Lord begins by rebuking the boldness, verging upon impious hardihood, of the mortal who presumes to contend with the Almighty, or censure his conduct (v. 1, 2); to which Job responds, with his first words of reply (v. 3-5), after which the Lord proceeds, repeating some of the introductory words to the first part of his speech (v. 6, 7); then in v. 8, brings out the main and really great charge against Job—that of imputing injustice to his Maker in his bold self-vindication—which rebuke the Lord enforces by appealing to Job to show his power and see if he has any worth naming that can at all compare with that of his Infinite Maker (v. 9-14.) Then resuming the strain of chap. 39, the Lord calls his attention to another remarkable specimen of the animal creation (v. 15-24).

1. Moreover, the Lord answered Job, and said,
2. Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct *him*? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.

"The Lord *answered* Job"—but the oriental sense of the word "answer" (prevalent in both the Old Testament and the New) is broader than merely a reply to a definite question, it being used in the sense of addressing one and speaking to any well known facts in his conduct, words or relations.—In v. 2, the first clause (emphatic and vital in the discourse) may be paraphrased thus:—Shall a mere mortal, assuming to be a reprovcr, go into earnest controversy with the Almighty? The word which our English version translates as a verb—"instruct"—is now conceded to be a noun, in the sense—a *reprover*. The one verb of the sentence ("contendeth") is a part of that very emphatic Hebrew idiom, made by combining the infinitive with the finite verb, thus;—contending, shall he contend—*i. e.*, shall he contend vigorously, boldly; shall he really undertake a set controversy with his Maker?—"He that censures God, let him answer for it"; it is a fearfully grave matter, and whoever shall undertake it should consider the solemn account he must render for such irreverence and daring impiety.

3. Then Job answered the Lord, and said,

4. Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

5. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

Job is not only appalled but humbled. Deeply conscious that he has said entirely too much already, he shuts his lips and declares he will say no more!

6. Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

7. Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

8. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

Vs. 6, 7 repeat verbatim a part of the introductory words of the first speech (38: 1-3). The grave charge brought against Job—the very head and front of his great offense against God—is distinctly put in v. 8;—Wilt thou annul my infinite right to rule? For to deny the justice of my judgments is equivalent to denying my right to rule at all. If it were supposable that the Infinite God should perpetrate injustice, he would by that injustice forfeit his right to rule at all, and would virtually vacate his throne. Hence the mortal who charges against God any injustice virtually denies his right to reign. So much seems to be implied in the first clause;—"Wilt thou even annul my right"—*i. e.*, as God?—"Wilt thou condemn me" (literally, hold me to be wicked) that thou mayest be righteous,"—*i. e.*, for the sake of self-justification?

9. Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

10. Deck thyself now *with* majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.

11. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one *that is* proud, and abase him.

12. Look on every one *that is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.

13. Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in secret.

14. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

It should be carefully noticed that on this most vital point of all in this great debate, the Lord seems to make his final appeal, not directly to the intrinsic justice of his administration, nor to facts which would certify to that justice, or would serve to illustrate it; but simply to his infinite power and majesty.—Hast thou an arm like God's? or a voice of thunder like his? Put on thine utmost majesty; array thyself in all thy beauty and glory; send forth the floods of thy wrath (v. 11); look on every most proud one and abase him!—To "tread down the wicked *in their place*" is to break them down *where they are*, underneath themselves, giving them not a moment to escape.—"To bind their faces *in secret*," should rather be in *darkness*:—consign them to darkness, deep, remediless, eternal!—In v. 14, the verb "confess" has usually the sense of *praise*—meaning here: Then will I give thee the credit and the honor of being able to save thyself by the might of thine own right arm.—The reasons for this appeal to the power and majesty of God, in a case which was essentially an impeachment of his justice, will come up for more full consideration hereafter. The fact challenges special investigation and should receive it.

15. Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.

16. Lo now, his strength *is* in his loins, and his force *is* in the navel of his belly.

17. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.

18. His bones *are as* strong pieces of brass; his bones *are* like bars of iron.

The word "*behemoth*" is transferred from the Hebrew—not translated. By general consent of all modern critics, he is the animal known best by his Greek name, "hippopotamus," or river-horse; yet as his characteristics are rather those of the ox than the horse, he might better be called the *river-ox*.—His proper home is the Nile of Egypt. He is amphibious—living both in

and out of water. The animals before referred to (38: 39-41 and 39) were either land animals or birds. This one and the "leviathan" (the crocodile) of chap. 41, are of both land and water.—This river-ox has many qualities in common with the land-ox, living on vegetables (not on flesh)—a fact the more noticeable because his great strength would enable him to supply himself readily with animal food if he had been constituted for it.—His force is—not "in the navel"—but in the *sinews* of his belly. He bends his tail like a cedar—as a cedar would be bent, only under great force. The sinews of his thighs are firmly wrapped together, interlaced so as to give the utmost strength. The strength of his bones is represented by the strongest known material (brass), in its strongest form—that of hollow pipes or tubes—the sense of the Heb. word for "pieces" (v. 18).

19. He *is* the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach *unto him*.

20. Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.

21. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens.

22. The shady trees cover him *with* their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about.

"The *chief* of the ways of God" I take to mean—the highest work of skill in constructing an animal of immense strength, yet of only moderate size. The last clause of v. 19 should be read:—"His Maker gave him his sword"—referring to his huge tusk or corner tooth of which he has two. "It is (says Conant) more than two feet long and hard as flint, striking fire with steel."—The word for "shady trees" (v. 22) signifies rather the *lotus*, whose leaves on the river's surface are his covert, underneath which and among the reeds and ferns on the margin of the river, he takes his rest. The English version might be understood to imply that he sleeps and rests on the land. His natural bed is in the water's edge.

23. Behold, he drinketh up a river, *and* hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.

24. He taketh it with his eyes: *his* nose pierceth through snares.

Quite unlike the English version, the Hebrew (v. 23) means:—The river rushes on proudly: he is not startled: he is fearless [trustful in himself] though Jordan burst forth at his mouth.—Why should he be afraid of water? It is one of his native elements. The text does not describe him as a great drinker of water, but as not fearing the rush of water about or upon himself. The translation of v. 24 is also very imperfect. It should read:—He [the hunter] takes him (behemoth) before his *own* eyes; he pierces through the nose with snares [hooks]. This is

the method of taking the river-ox as given in history. The animal is by nature sluggish and not timid. When he has not yet learned to fear man, and has not been wounded or in any way exasperated, his capture is easy, in the mode here indicated.



CHAPTER XLI.

The speech of Jehovah continued.

This chapter describes the *crocodile*, well known in the Nile; portrayed here in boldest imagery as one of the masterly works of God.

1. Canst thou draw out leviathan with a hook? or his tongue with a cord *which* thou lettest down?

2. Canst thou put a hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?

The name "leviathan" is transferred from the Hebrew—not translated. It is applied in the Scriptures to other animals as well; *e. g.*, to a large serpent (Job 3: 8), and to a sea-monster (Ps. 104: 26). Yet there can be no doubt that this animal is the crocodile of Egypt.—The first point made is in tacit contrast with behemoth, who *can* be caught with a hook; but wilt thou draw out leviathan *in that way*? Or (2d clause) wilt thou *press down* his tongue with a cord—*i. e.*, passed round his lower jaw and over his tongue? Wilt thou put a rush-cord (a cord made of the rush) into his nose, or bore his jaw with a hook?*

3. Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft *words* unto thee?

4. Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?

5. Wilt thou play with him as *with* a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?

Canst thou domesticate and tame leviathan so as to use him in thy labors, or make him a pet for thy maidens?

6. Shall the companions make a banquet of him? shall they part him among the merchants?

7. Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears?

8. Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more.

*There are several Heb. words in this chapter whose meaning is better understood now than when our received version was made.

“Companions” here are partners, supposed to be associated in the hunting, capture and sale of the crocodile.—Instead of “make a banquet,” we may read—*Dig a pit* as a method of taking the wildest animals—this being the only well established sense of the Hebrew. V. 7 suggests the methods of capture practiced, *e. g.*, in taking the whale. (V. 8) Lay thine hand upon him; try it for once:—once will suffice! Think no more of battle—*with him!* Literally—Add not to think of battle!

9. Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not *one* be cast down even at the sight of him?

10. None *is* so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me?

11. Who hath prevented me, that I should repay *him?* *whatsoever* is under the whole heaven is mine.

12. I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion.

Behold, the hope (*i. e.*, of taking him by any such means) will disappoint—will prove to be delusive.—If thou canst not face *him* in conflict, and dare not stir him up, who shall take his stand against *me*? Who shall dare provoke my wrath or think to measure his right arm against mine?—(In v. 11) Who hath first given aught to me that I should be bound to repay him? This English word “prevent” has long been obsolete in the sense given it by our translators, and hence entirely fails now to express what they meant by it. The sense here is—Who has been beforehand with me, first giving to me, so that I am bound to give back to him? Under the whole heaven, *it* is mine; *all*, ALL is mine!—Resuming the description, v. 12 says—I will not pass in silence his limbs, nor (literally) the word of his strength—his renowned, much talked of strength, etc.

13. Who can discover the face of his garment? *or* who can come *to him* with his double bridle?

14. Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth *are* terrible round about.

“Discover,” as usual in our version, in the sense *uncover*. The ultimate meaning here is—Who has removed his armor of scales so as to examine his skin underneath?—In the second clause of v. 13, the word for “bridle” is supposed to mean his *jaws*—the question put being this: Who will enter within his double jaws, and trust himself beneath those terrible teeth?

15. *His scales are his pride*, shut up together *as with* a close seal.

16. One is so near to another, that no air can come between them.

17. They are joined one to another, they stick together that they can not be sundered.

The Hebrew for "scales" is *shields*, our translation giving the ultimate sense, yet missing the figure under which it is clothed. His mighty shields are his pride—laid so close together; making an armature so impenetrable.

18. By his neesings a light doth shine, and his eyes *are* like the eyelids of the morning.

19. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, *and* sparks of fire leap out.

20. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as *out* of a seething pot or caldron.

21. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.

The obsolete word "neese" is modernized in *sneeze*. This crocodile has a habit of his own. Basking in the sunshine, he inflates himself, and then forces the heated air and steam through his nostrils as from a bellows. Glistening in the sun, this has somewhat the appearance of smoke and flame. To this appearance the passage alludes.

22. In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him.

23. The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they can not be moved.

In his neck, strength lodges [finds a permanent home]; and terror dances before him (last clause of v. 22)—meaning—the *terrified* quake in his presence.

24. His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether *millstone*.

25. When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves.

26. The sword of him that layeth at him can not hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.

27. He esteemeth iron as straw, *and* brass as rotten wood.

His heart is said to be firm and hard as knowing no fear.—The unintelligible clause—"By reason of breakings, they purify themselves" is made by Gesenius—"By reason of fear men miss their way in precipitate flight." Fuerst, in nearly the same sense: "They disappear, from terror, *i. e.*, they can not hold out." The verb should naturally mean, *to miss one's way*—here through consternation in the presence of an enemy.—V. 26 reads literally thus: One assailing him with the sword, it [the sword] shall not stand—*i. e.*, it will recoil and fail him. So the spear, the dart, and the coat of mail. None of the ordinary weapons of war had strength enough for such a foe.

28. The arrow can not make him flee: sling stones are turned with him into stubble.

29. Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.

30. Sharp stones *are* under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.

He hurls back his disdain in return for the war-missiles tossed so harmlessly at him.—In v. 30, we are to find—not “sharp stones,” but sharp points of the hard scales under his belly, which leave their traces on his path as the oriental threshing sledge would if drawn through mire.

31. He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.

32. He maketh a path to shine after him; *one* would think the deep *to be* hoary.

Moving along the deep sea, he tosses it into foam (as the modern wheel-steamer,) but compared here to the boiling of a pot, or the seething of ointment. He leaves a glistening path behind him; you might think the deep hoary with age.

33. Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear.

34. He beholdeth all high *things*: he *is* a king over all the children of pride.

Of all living creatures on the earth, he is most fearless, and is so by the nature given him by his Maker. Wilt thou not infer that *much more* must his glorious Maker be above all fear? Who will stand up against him when he shall arise in his majesty and might? If this leviathan looks down with calmness and disdain on all things high—king over all the sons of pride, how much more must this be true of his Infinite Maker!—Such are obviously the inferences for the sake of which this fearless invulnerable leviathan was set before the mind's eye of Job.



CHAPTER XLII.

Reply of Job, and conclusion of his history.

Here is the sequel to the whole book. Job becomes deeply penitent: the uttered words and the present majesty of Jehovah bring him to a better mind. He humbles himself low before the infinitely holy and just One and is forgiven of his sin and received again into favor (1-6). To Eliphaz and his associates the Lord expresses his displeasure and his dissatisfaction with their speeches, and requires them to take animal sacrifices; go to Job:

offer their sacrifices in their own behalf and ask his prayers for themselves (v. 7-9); thereupon the Lord turned Job's captive moans into songs of deliverance; doubled his blessings in the line of personal property (v. 10, 12); his old friends return to him with greetings and gifts (v. 11); a new family grows up about him (v. 13-15); his life continues yet one hundred and forty years, blessed by a numerous offspring and crowned with a ripe old age, and at last, a peaceful death.

1. Then Job answered the Lord, and said,

2. I know that thou canst do every *thing*, and *that* no thought can be withheld from thee.

I know that thou art able; almighty as to all [things.] Very appropriately Job uses the Hebrew tense which indicates both present and future time. Thou *art* and forever *will be*, able to do all things.—In v. 2 (2d clause), we must choose between two constructions: (a) No human thought can be concealed from thee:—(b) No purpose of thine can be restrained as to thee—in the sense that thou shalt be restrained or hindered from accomplishing it. The latter should be preferred as being supported by the parallelism. Thou canst do all things; nothing can be impossible—nothing can be even difficult to thee.—The word translated “thought” were more precisely rendered purpose, plan, design—sometimes used in a bad sense, yet often, as here, in a good sense. It is not the word which a Hebrew writer would choose for the simple idea of a *thought* as a mental conception.—Job is deeply impressed with the infinite power of God and his resources for accomplishing whatever he might design.

3. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

This first clause is substantially repeated from the first address of the Lord (38 : 2)—as if Job would say—Thou hast very appropriately accosted me in the words—“Who is this that darkens counsel,” etc. I am the man; I must confess that such words but too well describe my impudence and folly!—Why our translators in this verse say “Who is *he*?”—rather than as in 38 : 2—“Who is *this*?”—the Hebrew being the same in both cases—is not apparent. The word “*this*” is the best, as more suggestive of insignificance.—Observe Job says—“*Therefore* have I uttered,” etc., *i. e.*, I am the foolish, guilty man who has been darkening counsel by unwise, unmeaning words; that is the reason why I have uttered what I know not and never shall know (the Hebrew tense being both present and future)—things too wonderful for me, which I not only have not known but never shall know.

4. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak : I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

5. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

6. Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.

V. 4 might perhaps be thought irreverent in tone but for the fact that Job quotes in substance words twice spoken by the Lord himself (38: 3 and 40: 7).—With matchless force and fitness Job compares his present knowledge of God to that of sight; his past, to that of hearing.—I have *heard* about thee before; now I *see* thee. All human experience testifies to the clearness, vividness, perfection, of our sense-perceptions through the eye as compared with the dullness and feebleness of impressions that come only through the ear. We hear about things remote; the words bring only dim images and feeble perceptions; but when the eye takes them all in with undimmed vision, a new sense of what they are flashes upon the soul!—It is not perhaps certain that Job meant to say, I know more truth, more facts about God, now than before; but it is entirely certain that he meant—I *feel the force* of what I know as I never did before. I have a sense of what God is; I am impressed with his purity, greatness, majesty and glory as never in my former life. This was the main point in the antithesis between the past and the present—the hearing of the ear and the vision through the eye.—In v. 6 the translators have supplied “*myself*” in Italics, to indicate that no corresponding word appears in the Hebrew. Such is the fact, due to the idiomatic structure of the language which represents reciprocal action not by any word corresponding to *self*, but by special forms of the verb. In the present case the real sense is not badly given in the phrase—“I abhor myself,” yet the more exact meaning is—I loathe, repel, disown my *former* self—the rash, irreverent words I have spoken and the hateful spirit I have indulged. The most concise and forcible way of expressing this in our tongue is as we have it here, “I abhor myself.” So Job felt to the very depths of his soul. I see thee, O my God, as never before: therefore I abhor all my past words and thoughts, even my whole attitude and bearing toward Thee; and I repent in dust and ashes. No external symbols of humiliation, sorrow, penitence, can be too strong for my case.

7. And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me *the thing that is right*, as my servant Job *hath*.

8. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you *after your folly*, in

that ye have not spoken of me *the thing which is right*, like my servant Job.

9. So Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, went and did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job.

The Lord gives his decision upon the case of the three friends. Saying it twice over he makes the point emphatic—"Ye have not spoken as to me the right thing, as Job my servant has." Does this refer to Job's latest words, expressing his penitence and shame; or rather to the doctrine held by Job on the great points at issue as to God's ways of providence and discipline in this world? Probably the latter is included; the former can scarcely be left out of the divine thought. As he then stood before the Lord, Job was accepted, and his prayers for his brethren could be heard. Noticeably, the words of the Lord imply that while he *could* hear Job's prayer, he *could not* hear theirs. "Go (said he to them), take your animals for sacrifice to Job; offer them up for yourselves there in his presence. He will pray for you, *for* I will accept his prayers, that I deal not with you according to your folly"—*i. e.*, so that I shall not be compelled to visit your folly upon your own heads.—The circumstance that the Lord bade the three friends ask Job to pray for themselves, intimating that he would hear Job in their behalf but could not hear them, is too significant and too instructive to be passed over lightly. Think of the keen rebuke it bore to those misjudging, heartless friends! They had "verily thought themselves doing God service" by maintaining that his providences were wholly and only retributive, and that *therefore*, Job must be the greatest of sinners. They felt themselves justified in charging him with crimes he never dreamed of, and thought (no doubt) that they did well to harden their souls against all sympathy and pity for their smitten, suffering friend. It must have taken them as a galling surprise when the Lord said—"Go to Job, and ask his prayers in your own behalf. I shall hear him: I can not hear you"!—Were they standing by when Job humbled himself so penitently before the Lord, and did they hear his confessions and words of self-abasement? And was all this powerless on their Pharisaic souls? If so, there was only the more fitness in this sharp rebuke.—Moreover on Job's side, this arrangement was a model of wisdom. If any ill feeling had sprung up in Job's human sensibilities toward these abusive brethren, this was, of all means possible the most effective to cure it. Let him pray for them! Let him go before the face of the pure, the loving, the forgiving Father, and ask him to forgive their offense. How sweetly this would mollify his own feelings! How insensibly yet how surely it would mold his spirit into forgiveness and love!

10. And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

There can be no question that "captivity" is here a figure of speech to denote a condition of deepest affliction and extreme privation of good. In that age and country when whole families were so often dragged away from home and friends into hopeless bondage, the figure could not fail to be impressive. Ewald remarks that this figure (captivity) may have been suggested by the language in 7: 12 and 12: 14 and 13: 27.—Job's captivity was most emphatically *turned* in the sense that his state of deep affliction was in every point completely *reversed*; especially in those respects which bore most grievously upon him—the light of God upon his soul; the charge of egregious crimes; the withdrawal of even common respect, and the heaping of cruel contempt and scorn upon him as one utterly outcast from God.—The Lord not only restored but doubled his possessions.

11. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an ear-ring of gold.

12. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses.

13. He had also seven sons, and three daughters.

14. And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Keren-happuch.

15. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

Children he had none to return to him now with greetings and consolations; but his brethren and sisters came and all his former acquaintance. Noticeably they came not only to condole and comfort, but to contribute to re-establish his fortune. How much the "*kesita*"—"a piece of money") amounted to in value, is not entirely certain. Some estimate it at about two shekels; others, four. It was not a coin but a certain weight—a circumstance which proves a very high antiquity—the stamping of coin indicating a somewhat advanced stage of civilization. It is only in the age of the Pentateuch that we read of money passing by weight. We have this same word Gen. 33: 19.—Of Job's three daughters three facts are given;—that in personal beauty they surpassed all the daughters of the East; that their father gave them inheritance among their brethren, which seems to have been a departure from the usages of the age; and thirdly, their individual

names. Since oriental names are always significant, we may suppose the writer intended to give his readers whatever suggestions this significance might afford. "Jemima" is a dove; "Kezia" is the name for *cassia*, one of the aromatic spices of the East, and "Keren-happuch" is a paint-horn—a horn containing paint. It will be seen that these significant names look toward beauty, culture, refinement.

16. After this lived Job a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, *even* four generations.

17. So Job died, *being* old and full of days.

The great age which Job ultimately attained is a noticeable fact. He could scarcely have been less than fifty at the time of these events; since he had seven sons and three daughters—the sons at least having homes if not even families of their own. His entire life therefore reached (supposably) the age of one hundred and ninety—exceeding that of Abraham by fifteen years and that of Isaac by ten. This fact is important, both as indicating the great prosperity which ultimately crowned the last and longest period of his life, and also as supplying some data for the general chronology of the book—the place in history and time to which these events must be assigned. True, his age was exceptionally great compared with other patriarchs of his time. Yet notwithstanding some deductions on this score, his great age should still have weight in fixing the time when he lived. Moses reached an extreme age—one hundred and twenty. Job must have lived in earlier times than his.

It is refreshing to think of these long years, of a purer, higher religious life, of far better views of God's ways in providence, of wholesome reflection upon his past experience; of deep, unalloyed bliss in the communion of human souls with God, the Infinite Father, when they have truly come down into their own place of humble, trustful submission and grateful love. So we may suppose Job filled out one hundred and forty years of a fruitful, ripening old age, himself a joy to his children and friends, and they a joy and consolation to him—his chastened spirit continually witnessing—"It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

It is now in place to take a general view of the aim and results of this closing section of the book of Job—the words attributed to Jehovah, as the final umpire in this long debate (chap. 38-42).

In the first place the speech has *perfect* unity of aim and purpose. It aims at one result and one only—which is, to impress Job with a sense of his folly and sin in the severe reflections he had cast upon God's justice and upon the general course of his providence toward himself. To show that God is great and Job very little; that God is wise and good, and has all the power and skill requisite to manage well the universe he has created, while Job is infinitely too weak, too vile, too ignorant, to assume the

place and to do the work of God, or even to sit in judgment upon God's doings—these are the aims of this sublime address. It was shaped and planned to humble Job and to impress him with a keen sense of his unspeakable folly and impious presumption in calling God to account for his providential government over men;—*and it fully accomplished its purpose.*

Next, let us note carefully some points *not* embraced within the plan and purpose of this address. It was manifestly *not* within its purpose to discuss or to pass upon the whole problem of suffering as sent (or suffered to fall) upon good men. It was no part of its aim to show that these sufferings are *disciplinary*; or, on the other hand, that they are *retributive*; or that they may be sometimes of the one sort and sometimes of the other; or that they may combine both purposes at once. These points had indeed been involved largely in the discussion, as reported, between the three friends, Job, and Elihu. But in the final award by the Almighty, he saw fit to make no direct allusion to these points of the debate, except so far as may be involved in his disapproval of what the three friends had said; and even this may refer to their spirit fully as much as to their doctrine. But the Lord made no clear decision as to the truth of any of these diverse theories, nor did he discuss them at all.

It will help us to gain the true view of the aim of this great address if we consider carefully the historic occasion of this entire discussion, viz., the case of suffering Job, out of which it grew. Job had the reputation even before the Lord of most exemplary piety—"a man who feared God and eschewed evil." Yet upon him there fell all suddenly a fearful avalanche of sufferings—which stripped him of every earthly good and left him only a suffering existence. Now, be it specially noticed, the occasion of these terrific inflictions was a *test-issue* between God and Satan upon the question whether Job's piety was or was not sheer selfishness. Was it real piety at all? Satan declared it was not, and said that if God were to strip Job of all the good he had given him, Job would renounce his piety. The Lord said—I put him in your hand to take from him every thing short of life: try him if you will. These memorable afflictions therefore came of God's permission, but were really inflicted by Satan for the purpose here indicated.

From these historic facts, which disclose to us the occasion and purpose of these extraordinary sufferings, the following inferences come irresistibly, viz.:

1. That these sufferings sent upon Job were in no proper sense either disciplinary or retributive. In the light of their primary purpose as permitted of God, they were not sent either for his discipline and correction, or as retribution for his sin. Therefore they did not at all involve the question *for which of these two supposable ends were they sent*, because they were sent for neither the one nor the other. As shown in the definitely revealed occasion of their being permitted, the question at issue

between discipline and retribution did not come in at all, but was really ruled out.

2. Another inference, equally logical and resistless, is that, as the occasion in this case lay outside the possible knowledge of mortals, where neither Job nor his friends could know any thing about it, *such occasions may arise again*; nay, more, *may occur often*, in which the ultimate reason why good men suffer lies outside the pale of human discernment, and therefore must be *to man an impenetrable mystery*. That is to say, God may have good reasons for afflicting his saints which, under the present laws of our world he can not reveal to us, and we are therefore shut up to submission and to trust, *without knowing the reasons*. There may be, nay, more, there *will be*, cases which defy all human philosophy to account for them. The ultimate reasons lie beyond the possible range of our knowledge. We can not force these mysterious cases under the head of retribution for sins committed, or of discipline and correction for the spiritual profit of the sufferer. The latter result may follow as *incidental*. From the nature of the case it is very sure to be an incidental result; but the ultimate reason why the stroke falls *where* and *as* it does, is the point now under consideration, and this may lie in a realm into which no human eye can pierce. Now these facts are entirely vital to the solution of the great problem of the Book of Job. They constitute the very gist of this problem—the center and soul of it. As the book is built historically upon circumstances lying altogether outside the pale of human cognizance; as the sufferings of Job were brought upon him in pursuance of this test-conflict between God and Satan; a case is here “made up” (as the lawyers would say) to illustrate and settle a principle at law—in the government of God. The entire problem of the sufferings of good men can not be brought within the alternatives—*discipline or retribution*. It may lie outside of either and of both. It may set at naught, therefore, all the soundings of our longest line of human philosophy.—Thus the case of Job brings us to the sublime moral conclusion that God reigns in perfect power, wisdom, and love, and therefore surely doeth all things well. Hence, our only and highest wisdom and our most sacred duty terminate in sweet, humble submission to his will, trusting with utmost confidence that his own results will in the end vindicate his wisdom and his love. Consequently we may see the wisdom and the pertinence of this closing section of the book—the words of the Almighty. He had one end to accomplish in this address—the best he could possibly propose to himself—viz., to lay the foundation for submission and faith as toward himself under any possible sufferings that may befall us, amid the extremest darkness and mystery as to his immediate and special purposes in the afflictions he may send upon his people.

Other various moral lessons of this book will receive special attention in the conclusion.

CONCLUSION.

UNDER this head I group several miscellaneous topics, incidental to the discussions of this book.

I. *The true doctrine as to the inspired authority of the contents of Job.*

For the sake of two quite diverse classes—those who receive all they find in the Bible with unquestioning but sometimes unenlightened faith; and those whose bent is to receive none of it, this investigation ought to be a part of every work which aims to place the Book of Job in its true light before the public.

My aim is not precisely to discuss the inspiration of this book as a whole by adducing the reasons for and against its admission into the Jewish canon; nor, back of this, the question whether it was so admitted. The point I aim at will be gathered from this statement of the question: *What opinions expressed and what things said by the various speakers in this book are to be accepted as having inspired authority?* And on what principle shall the line be drawn between the inspired words and the uninspired?

Even a slight attention to this book will show that in general character and composition, it stands entirely by itself among the numerous books of the Bible, differing from any and every other in its general structure and subject-matter. It does not detail to us the personal history, words and deeds of Jesus as in the four gospels; nor the history of the planting of Christian churches as in the "Acts of the Apostles;" nor is it made up of letters to those churches; nor (comparing it with the other Old Testament books) is it the history of the Jewish Church or nation, or the messages and predictions of the old prophets; or the wisdom of inspired

sages in the form of proverbs; nor is it sacred songs from the sweet Psalmists of Israel for the devotions of the sanctuary. No; it stands apart from any and all of these books—a special discussion of a great theological problem—a discussion carried on by a number of disputants, each bearing his respective part—which the Lord himself closed at length by appearing as umpire and giving the final decision. The theological problem was no other than the sufferings of good men in the present life, considered as coming from the hand of God; or in other words, the principles of God's administration of good and evil upon men in the present life. As discussed between Job, his three friends and Elihu, it bore mainly on the point whether the sufferings or blessings sent of God are *retributive*, or are *disciplinary*, or may include both.—Now it is obvious that in such a discussion—the speakers taking perhaps not only diverse but even opposite grounds and expressing opposite opinions, it would not be safe to read the book with the foregone conclusion that *all* its contents—all the expressed opinions of men which it records—being in the Bible—must be true and even of inspired authority. Here are some thoughts and words ascribed to Satan, whose name and character are sufficient vouchers that those at least are lies (John 8: 44). Here are whole chapters of discourse from Job's three friends (Eli-phaz, Bildad, Zophar), whose words Jehovah, in his final award, did not by any means indorse, but disapproved, declaring—"Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Offer, therefore, for yourselves a burnt-offering and my servant Job shall pray for you . . . lest I deal with you after your folly in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job" (42: 7, 8).—This comparative indorsement of Job's words as more right than theirs still leaves the question open:—How much of what Job said was purposely indorsed by the Lord as right? Certainly not all of it, else the Lord would not have come down upon him with that appalling, withering exclamation—"Who is this that hideth counsel by words without knowledge"? (38:2). Indeed it is a grave question whether the Lord's comparative approval of Job's words above those of his three friends had not a special, possibly an exclusive, reference to Job's then recent words of deep contrition, humble confession and most profound humiliation. It is scarcely supposable that he had no reference to these most fitting and precious words. He might have re-

ferred also in a qualified way to the general doctrine maintained by Job in the discussion, indorsing it as nearer the truth than the views of his three opponents. But even if this be admitted, the indorsement is still too vague and indefinite to give us any considerable aid in determining which of Job's expressed views were approved of God, and which were not.

There was a fifth speaker—the young man Elihu—from whom we have six chapters, but no word from the Almighty appears in the book, either indorsing or not indorsing what he said.

It appears, therefore, that the sanction of God's special indorsement to the doctrines held and the opinions expressed by the speakers in this discussion is given very sparingly. In regard to most that is said, it is not given at all, but from much of it it is distinctly withheld.—Yet from these premises, let no reader leap rashly to the conclusion that these discussions are therefore useless to us and unworthy of a place in the inspired book of God. Not all Scripture is recommended as profitable for *doctrine*. Some of it is good for "reproof" and some for "instruction." In Job are some things that God meant to *reprove*, and his reproof of them is exceedingly useful to us. Here is much that is richly instructive, not for its *truth* but for its *error*—for the grievous mistakes which (as shown here) good men made in those early ages in their attempts to interpret the ways of God toward godly men. It is not easy to overestimate the value to us of this very ancient portrayal of the earliest known views held by intelligent men on the great problems of this book. If they groped in comparative darkness and made some grievous mistakes, let us the more bless God for the clearer light of our Christian age; nay more—let us be thankful that we are shown how in those very early times the Lord condescended to come down and bear a hand in this momentous discussion, and let in some light from the very heavens above, upon this dark problem.—Yet further, a record in the Bible of things said and done may be truthful, and yet not in the highest sense inspired. It may be valuable because it is true, and because, being true, it becomes instructive. So far as appears, there is no ground to question the essential truth of the historic records in this book as to the great afflictions that befell Job, nor to question his own statements concerning himself; his physical and his mental agonies; the fearful conflicts of soul through which he passed; the social

contempt into which he fell; and the cruel suspicion—nay more, the groundless charges against his moral character with which his friends harassed and tormented this greatest of human sufferers. The truth of these statements serves to heighten the interest of the great problem which this book labors to solve. It is no mere ideal question of theory or speculation. It comes down to actual human experience, into the deepest sensibilities of human hearts. The book therefore has both interest and value, even though many of the opinions it expresses and of the doctrines it puts forward from the lips of its speakers lack the authority of direct inspiration from God.

If now it be deemed important to give a general rule or draw a line which may separate the non-inspired declarations of this book from the inspired, it may be said—(a) All that falls from the lips of Jehovah lacks no element of supreme authority. (b) What fell from human lips can not be accepted as inspired merely on the ground that they said it. These disputants were not prophets, inspired of God, they were not speaking as men sent of God, and indorsed by God either by miracle or by prophecy, or by a prophetic character established in any reliable way.—Consequently their words must be brought to some other standard than their own personal authority for a worthy judgment as to their being the truth of God. But this amounts to saying that those words, considered in themselves, are inspired in no other or higher sense than the words of uninspired men in every age;—i. e., are not in any just sense *inspired* at all.

Applying these results to the speeches of Job's three friends, we have these things to say :—(1). They have spoken some truth, but nothing that is in any just sense inspired—nothing that has authority as coming from God.—(2) The one main doctrine which they labored incessantly to establish and to press upon Job is unquestionably false, viz., the doctrine that all the evils which befall men in this world are retributive—the proper punishment of sin; and are therefore an index to the sufferer's guilt. This can not be true. To prove it from human experience and observation would require the testimony to be *universal* and *never varying*. But the proof they adduced was very limited. The only thing they proved was that *in some cases—not in all cases*—wicked men suffered in this life. Of course their proofs utterly failed to sustain their proposition. All such proving of that doctrine must fail in the same way.—(3) In the final decision passed

upon the merits of this discussion by the Lord himself, he distinctly disallowed, and thereby condemned their doctrine.

—(4) Essentially the same doctrine, held to some extent in the time of our Lord's ministry, received his unqualified condemnation. See Luke 13 : 1-5 and John 9 : 2, 3.—(5) It might be objected against this doctrine that it is of pernicious tendency and therefore can not be true. This point will come up for consideration hereafter.

The general results above expressed in regard to the inspired authority of the opinions found in this book should be applied to the doctrine of the *under-world*—the *Sheol* of the Hebrew writers. The abode and state of human souls after death have constituted one of the great problems of human thought and search through all the ages. Every thing we can *know* upon this subject, we shall accept, not only with joy and thankfulness, but with a sense of relief as when great burdens of doubt and darkness are lifted from the heart. Oh, if we might only *know* something with certainty as to that home for the departed spirit which is so soon to be our own ! But have we any revelations here from the lips of Job that will add to our certain knowledge of this under-world ?—It may at least be a matter of interest to us to study what he says and to ascertain the views held in those earliest ages on this momentous subject. It may add something to the historical development of human opinions, even though it add little or nothing to theological science—facts certainly known—of the future life.

All we find in this book on the subject falls from the lips of Job himself. Neither his three friends, Elihu nor the Lord, have said any thing concerning it. Job has allusions more or less full in four passages—viz., 3 : 13-19 and 10 : 21, 22 and 14 : 10-22 and 17 : 13-16.—Comparing these passages, we note a very considerable diversity in the general impressions they make. The first in order (chap. 3) is not specially somber, but rather restful and quiet—the points it makes being largely negative, setting forth the *absence* in that world of the various wrongs and oppressions under which the millions of earth suffer and groan during their earthly life. If I had gone there (says Job) direct from the womb of my mother, “I should have lain still and been quiet ; I should have slept ; then had I been at rest.” “There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. There the prisoners rest together ; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there, and the servant (slave) is free

from his master.”——But while we may say of this picture that it is not specially somber, of the next in order (10: 20-22), the one feature prominent above all the rest is—it is nothing else *but somber*. No words can be found that would intensify the darkness of the picture. All is *dark*, DARK, dismal as the night of the grave; “a land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death; without order [a perfect chaos] where what light there may be is as darkness.”——As we compare these diverse conceptions, of the under-world, we shall be moved to ask, How much were the views of Job shaded by the stand-point from which he took his picture? In the former passage (3: 13-19), he supposes himself to have gone into that world from the point of his human birth—a mere spark of being, with no activities of earthly life involved in his destiny, no burden of guilt upon his soul; no dread responsibilities accruing from a life of accountable deeds done here in the body. From such a stand-point of view, he sees in that under-world nothing for himself but a restful waiting (for perhaps he knows not what); but in general the state is one where the giant oppressions of earth are foreclosed and forbidden ever to come, and where a certain sort of peace and quiet reign with naught to disturb. Must we not conclude that the shadings of this picture are projected forward from the point where he stood?——In the second passage (10: 20-22), this is, if possible, even more manifest. His present as put in this chapter is dismal in the extreme; scarce one ray of light blends itself in the thick darkness of his state. Now may we not suppose that the deep, pure darkness of the under-world, as seen from this point, was mostly due to the mind’s power of projecting its own thought and feeling forward into that otherwise unknown world, and coloring it with the hues of its present?——It is obvious that so far as this law of mind comes into play in Job’s painting of the under-world, it detracts from the reliability of his conceptions as related to abstract truth.

In the next passage (14: 12-22) if my interpretation of it is correct, there is a new feature, of immense interest;—viz., the doctrine of *another state of existence*, yet further onward, *beyond* the period passed in this under-world—where God will remember his servant Job and manifest a longing desire toward the work of his own hands. Under the inspiration of this hope Job said—“All the days of my appointed time will I wait [in Sheol] till my change come”—and I pass thence into the far more blessed life beyond. The Heb. word for

“appointed time” suggests a service in war which must be filled out for the allotted time.—The fourth passage (17 : 13–16) makes a point of kindred character, for it shows that Job had yet some real tangible “hope” that went down with him within the bars of the pit.

In regard to the *locality* of this world of the dead, all the representations both in Job and throughout the Old Testament concur in going *down* to find it. It is *below*. Men thought of it as a “*pit*,” as an *under-world*. In accounting for this universal thought, we might perhaps say that the place for the soul followed the law of destination for the body. The body, they saw, went back to its mother earth. This destination appears in the original decree—“Unto dust thou shalt return.” A custom almost universal opened a grave in the bosom of the earth, or an excavation in rock, to receive the mortal remains of the dead. What more natural than to suppose that the spirit also went *down* to some lower depth, to some unknown region under ground, for its place of abode? —We might say—Where else could they locate its place? Of other worlds, supposably fitted for its location, they could know nothing. To lift its home into the atmosphere, somewhere in the vast expanse of sky above, would scarcely meet their notions of a local habitation.

The more important question is—Can we allow any authority to their notions of the soul’s future locality? I can see no ground for conceding to them any authority whatever. Did they *know* any thing on this point? Nothing. The notion prevailed widely, we know. It was current among the ancient Greek and Roman poets, and was fully developed in their mythology; but this gives it no additional authority. —Furthermore, the ancient classic mythologies made two great apartments in this under-world; the one dismal, cheerless, dark—fit abode for guilty souls in which to wander ever, homeless and forlorn: the other, an Eden of delights, a very Elysium, where the good enjoyed the rewards of a well-spent life.—In Job’s allusions to this under-world, we scarcely find this twofold conception developed. The absence of it may be due to the brevity and incompleteness of his allusions. The patriarchs of his times and of yet earlier times speak with hope and joy of being “gathered to their fathers.” It must be presumed that in their view, the wicked were not among them, but elsewhere.

There are elements of great and blessed truth in all these views, whether of Job, the patriarchs, or the classic heathen

poets. The *doctrine of a future life* for human souls underlies them all. Throughout, there is the assumption of the soul's immortality.—No people known to us during those earliest ages held to the death of human souls. That the soul was to be annihilated at death, or at any period after death, seems never to have been thought supposable; much less, possible and actual. Whether this early belief were due to that instinctive revulsion under which human souls recoil from annihilation; or to a deep intuition of the reason; or to a sense of *oughtness* in the moral convictions of men—that human deeds *ought* to have a more finished and just retribution somewhere than they receive in this life; or to an original revelation from God, transmitted by tradition from age to age;—to which of these sources (if to one only) and if to several, in what measure to each—it is perhaps impossible to decide. It may however suffice for our present purpose to say that a belief so universal in those early ages, and so related to the noblest qualities of the human soul, may safely be accepted as founded in truth—too deeply founded to admit of rational question. No impulses save those of guilt and consequent fear seem ever to have begotten any considerable doubt as to the certainty of a future life.

The conviction that this future life is related to the present as one of reward and punishment has been scarcely less universal—a fact which goes far to prove that this belief in a future life has been due mainly to moral considerations—to evidence coming in upon its moral side. There *ought* to be more retribution for the deeds of time than we see or feel here; therefore the *soul must live on after the death of the body to receive it*.

As to the truth and reliability of Job's expressed views of the under-world, we must come to these conclusions:

1. On the relatively unimportant points—its locality (in what direction from our present home); and upon whatever relates to its *external*, we can recognize no authority in Job's opinions.

2. But on the really vital points—*e. g.*, the fact of a future life—holding on despite of death and with sustained identity of moral being and responsibilities; involving of course, the fullest mental consciousness; a state of existence adapted to *retribution* for the deeds of the life that now is;—on all these points, which underlie the ancient conceptions of the under-world, there can remain no ground for doubt whatever.

Later revelations in the Scriptures and especially those

which fell from the lips of Him who “brought life and immortality to light” have served in large measure to fill up the outline as to the moral purposes and results of the after life, leaving nothing more to be desired as to the great, vital points above named; but leaving almost every thing as to the relatively unimportant points of location and surroundings, in still unrelieved darkness.

II. A second topic, deeply involved in the great problem of this Book of Job, may be suggested comprehensively by the phrase—*Progress of doctrine*.—Naturally this progress runs in two parallel lines; viz., (1) Progress in the development of the true doctrine of suffering as related specially to good men in the present life:—(2) Progress correspondingly in conceptions of the character and attributes of God as involved in this great problem—the sufferings of his people.

1. In the first of these parallel lines, we are probably safe in assuming that the earliest stage of opinion was essentially that of Job’s three friends, viz., that the sufferings of even apparently good men were *retributive*—actual punishment for sin, and consequently a true index to its aggravation. Under this stage of the doctrine it must always be held that the greatest sufferers are proven to be the greatest sinners. This precisely was the doctrine which the three friends persistently maintained and pushed incessantly upon their stricken friend. It should be said, moreover, that in their view human sufferings, though retributive, yet left the door open for repentance and submission to God; and through this open door, for restoration to God’s favor—in this respect differing radically from the pure and eternal retribution, visited upon the guilty in the world to come. They also held that God’s inflictions of suffering were never in violation of justice, but rather rested on the basis of a perfectly just administration of good or evil according to human desert.—Moreover, they maintained, rather by assertion than by proof, that all the facts of human life verified their theory. They found *some* such facts; but had to ignore many more which refused to fall in under their theory. Hence, logically considered, their reasoning was very lame. In its bearing upon Job, we have had occasion to notice that it served only to irritate and agonize—never to convince.

2. A second stage in the progress of this doctrine admitted the idea of discipline and correction as always a part at least of the divine purpose, but did not altogether exclude the element of retribution. Elihu apparently held this modified

doctrine, giving more prominence to discipline than the other friends of Job had done, but not distinctly excluding retribution from the objects and designs of suffering. Thus opinions were advancing by stages toward the true doctrine.—Elihu's views of suffering as sent of God for discipline are brought out fully in 33: 19-30 and 34: 31, 32 and 36: 8-12.

3. A third and final stage of opinion held that the sufferings of the righteous are *for discipline exclusively*—always looking toward moral culture and the perfecting of moral character. We find the germ, at least, of this perfected doctrine in Prov. 3: 11, 12: "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction. For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." In the same strain is Ps. 94: 12: "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews develops the idea fully and admirably (12: 5-12): "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." . . . "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons." Human fathers chasten (sometimes) "after their own pleasure;" the Great Father of our spirits, only for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness."—It will be seen that in this completed stage of the doctrine, the inflictions of suffering upon God's people are not in any measure vindictive, but on the contrary are the indication and proof of parental love. Never are they in any sense *retributive*; they are no part of the proper *punishment of sin*. They do indeed recognize the presence of sin, or at least of moral imperfection. They assume that the sufferer is not yet as pure as he may be, and are therefore sent for the definite purpose of making him more fully a "partaker of the Father's holiness."

The second and parallel line of progress in doctrine respects the *human conception of God* in his relation to the sufferings sent upon apparently good men.—Here, however, let it be observed, the question is not precisely—What elements enter into the character of God to make up the sum total of his attributes; but rather this:—What special elements of his character should be brought and kept before the mind of the sufferer as developed toward him, and what views of God shall he take as a means of adjusting himself morally to God's dispensations of affliction?

Thus considered, we shall be able to trace a manifest *prog-*

ress of doctrine, quite analogous to the other line of progress in the theory of suffering as above presented.

1. In the earliest stages as exemplified by Job's three friends, we find an almost exclusive appeal to God's majesty and power. He is to be thought of by suffering Job as *great*, far above man; as clothed in majesty; as ruling to inspire awe, and under its impressions to hush every murmur into silence. If any mystery hangs over his ways; if there are things not explicable on the theory of retribution for obvious sin—let it be realized that God is a sovereign who gives no account to man of any of his matters.—Room was provided under this scheme, at this stage of the doctrine, for the attribute of justice. The sufferings inflicted upon men, being real retribution for sin, were measured out wholly and only on the principles of justice.

2. It was some advance to bring up to view God's attribute of *wisdom* as developed in the infliction of suffering upon the righteous. For wisdom contemplates good ends as being definitely sought, and this led on toward the conception of other ends than pure retribution. That God in fact exercised wisdom in the infliction of suffering was more than suggested by the appeal made, in his own sublime discourse, to his works of creation and providence in framing the material universe and in constructing its animal and vegetable kingdoms. We have seen that this appeal was obviously shaped to suggest this inference:—Will not the same God be no less wise to secure great and good ends in administering his providential government over a sinning world?

3. Next we find (*e. g.*, in the later books of the Old Testament) a marked stage of progress in doctrine, manifested in setting forth the *pity and compassion of God* as being deeply moved by the sufferings of his people. It is not in the Book of Job but in the Psalms that we read: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (Ps. 103: 15). Not in Job, but as far on as in Jeremiah (31: 18, 20) we read: "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." . . . "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still. Therefore my bowels are troubled for him; and I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."—In Hosea (11: 8) we find this: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? . . . My heart is

turned within me; my repentings are kindled together.”——With exquisite beauty and force as well as with marvelous philosophic distinctness, we find the whole subject unfolded in Jeremiah’s Lamentations (3: 22–41). Here may be seen God’s purposes of chastening and moral correction, yet every word bathed in the tenderness of unutterable compassion—brought home to the very heart of the sufferer, moaning sorely under the chastening rod.——“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. . . . It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him. For the Lord will not cast off forever; but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies; for he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.” “Wherefore doth a living man complain—a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens,” etc.——The great central idea—that *God is a Father to his people*, and chastens them only as a father does the son he loves, with yearning, pitying heart, only for their moral good, stands out very distinctly in the Old Testament prophets. Indeed, in their special mission to God’s wayward, chastened people, this was the sweet burden of their message.

4. Finally, in the last stage, the full-orbed glory of his love to his people shone forth in the incarnation—Jesus, an elder brother, moving among men during his earthly life to bear their burdens of sorrow and to lift crushing griefs from stricken hearts, ultimately laying down his life for his people; then rising to become and forever remain a merciful and compassionate High Priest in things pertaining to God—not one who can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who was tempted in all points as his people are. Coupled with this gloriously full and unshaded light as to God’s compassionate, loving-kindness, there shines forth also in the New Testament the fullest possible development of God’s providential rule for the best discipline and culture of his people and for their richest final reward, showing how he “makes all things work together for good to them that love God;” how “these light afflictions which are but for a moment work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal

weight of glory;" how "if we suffer with him (Christ), we shall also reign with him;" how "the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ;" and how it behooves us to "be in subjection to the Father of our spirits and live"—because he "chastens only for our profit that we may be partakers of his holiness."

This New Testament doctrine, it will be seen, is far in advance of the doctrine held and set forth by the human speakers in the Book of Job. Many (perhaps not all) of the reasons for a light on this subject so dim in Job and so full and glorious in Paul and Peter, are within our reach, and may be briefly suggested—thus:

Not all the Bible could be compressed into one chapter.—Historical facts and events, such as the ways of God with ancient Israel; the persecutions endured by Christian martyrs in the New Testament age; and, more than all, the great fact of the incarnation, afforded illustrations and manifestations of God by means of which the revelations of himself to men were continually progressing, and without which illustrative aid, finite minds could not be taught of God impressively. But history is a *thing of time*. It takes time to *make history*; time therefore to evolve whatever requires the aid of historic events to unfold it.—Again, it has manifestly been in the divine plan—the wisdom of which is not in all respects inscrutable—not to attempt to reveal *all* his great leading attributes at once and simultaneously, but rather one by one and progressively. Under this general plan, the attribute of *power*—creative and administrative power—came first in order. With power was naturally associated *authority to rule* and the right to enforce obedience by incipient, illustrative retribution.—Power, clothing itself with majesty, inspires fear and awe. We shall have read the Old Testament but superficially if we fail to see there that the earliest type of piety is spoken of as "*the fear of the Lord*."—Manifestations of God's pity and compassion were of later development. The great depth of God's love for lost men could not be fully brought out by any thing less than the incarnation and atoning death of his Son.

Another point, perhaps more vital than any other, lies in the nature of a sinning moral agent, such as man. If God would restore and save him, the first step must be to check his sinful course by impressing him with fear. "The fear

of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”—the very starting-point from which to advance and reach it. But to impress the sinner with fear demands the demonstration of God’s power. Hence, by the very laws of a sinning nature, power must be the first divine attribute to be put prominently forward. If love were revealed before power, it would most surely be abused. Practically it would be of no effect—a mere waste of effort—availing only to make sinners more bold in their sin.—If any reader questions the soundness of this philosophy, let him at least refer to the world’s great historic facts. Look at the antediluvian ages—the first experiment made with a sinning race. Life and health stretching far on into the centuries; a gracious providence dispensing almost nothing but blessings, with only the minimum of affliction and suffering; with little indeed to impress fear and reverent awe of God—“vengeance against evil works not executed speedily” but long, *long* delayed:—What, after sixteen centuries of experiment, proved to be the result? One small family embraced all the piety that survived among mankind! The masses were the hardest, most reckless, God-defiant generation that earth has ever known. What had long-suffering *love* achieved toward their salvation? Nothing. What course was God compelled to adopt before he could really *begin* a successful endeavor to reclaim fallen man? Sweep that whole generation away under the awful flood! Power, clothing itself with majesty and coupling itself with terrible justice, must lay the foundation for “the fear of the Lord.” Hence in his wisdom, God made it thenceforward the established order in manifesting his attributes before a sinning race, to reveal power and justice, before love. Thus it came to pass that in the early age of Job the main vindication of God’s justice is made to rest upon his power. “Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?” (18: 3). “Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, nor will the Almighty pervert judgment” (34: 12). That is—one who is Almighty can do no wickedness; can perpetrate no injustice. Essentially the same sentiment appears in the words of Abraham (Gen. 18: 25): “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”—Was it accepted as the first intuition of the human reason that the Great Supreme, the Almighty One, must of necessity be just and righteous? This seems to have been the basis on which those men rested their convictions of God’s justice.—Hence it was that when, at the close of this long debate, the Lord met Job and would

impress upon him a sense of his sin, he came in awful majesty; he revealed his glorious *power*. He neither affirmed nor sought to illustrate his justice, but left it to be inferred from his Almighty power, coupled with manifestations of his wisdom in the works of his hand. Evidently Job did make this inference, at once, spontaneously—that a God of such ineffable majesty and glory *MUST be perfect in justice and righteousness*;—nay, more, must be *good*, and therefore intrinsically worthy of homage, reverence, obedience and trust.—Wisely, therefore, in the order of revealing his attributes to men, God puts power before love; law before Gospel:—so that in the human soul, the sense of guilt and fear of wrath precede the deep humiliation of the heart before God and the uplifted cry for mercy.

One qualifying remark is due before we pass the theme in hand—the *progress of doctrine*; viz., that the special points involved in the address of the Lord himself *are an exception*. From those points there never can be any progress forward to something higher and better. It was true then and will be true always—(1) That the ultimate reasons why God sends suffering upon good men lie sometimes utterly beyond the range of human knowledge, enwrapped in mystery, at least till we shall reach a brighter world than this:—and (2) That, *therefore*, man's supreme duty is to trust God to rule the world wisely and well, and to bow in perfect submission to every dispensation of his providence. These are ultimate truths, for our dark world, upon which there can be no advance or improvement. In the revelations of God's character, which should inspire trust and *submission*, there may be progress;—there has been.

The reader will notice that in the main I have spoken of the great problem of the sufferings of good men as it was held and discussed *by the human speakers* in this book—not as presented by the Lord himself.

This subject admits of being expanded far more fully. At present, this must suffice. So much seemed necessary as bearing toward a proper appreciation of the book of Job. It is not easy for those whose eyes have been so long accustomed and adjusted to the full blaze of the Glorious Sun of righteousness, truth and love, to put themselves back into the very dim twilight of Job's early morning, and realize his deep perplexities, his heart-agonies; the inextricable confusion into which the sophistries and half-truths thrust upon him by his friends had thrown him. The story is richly

suggestive of the conflicts to which suffering saints were subjected in those times of so great comparative darkness; also of the method adopted of God to clear away by slow stages this deep darkness; suggestive too of our exceeding great occasion for gratitude that, before and during the Gospel age, light on this great subject was shed abroad so abundantly as really to leave us nothing more to desire.

III. Some incidental points of a miscellaneous sort seem to call for a more full presentation than they have received in the Notes.

1. The book suggests one of the possible reasons for God's permission of suffering upon those who are not only really but eminently pious; viz., *a test-conflict between God and Satan*. It will be remembered that the historical introduction to this book of Job puts this point beyond doubt. The reason assigned there for permitting such fearful calamities to fall upon Job was that God called Satan's attention to his servant Job as a model of piety; whereupon Satan said that his apparent piety was only a refined selfishness; to which the Lord replied—You may put him to the test on that point if you like;—and Satan accepted the challenge. Hence came upon Job this fearful visitation of calamity.—Here, then, are ultimate reasons for the permission of great calamities upon the holiest of men, which reasons lie outside the range of human observation—such as no deep soundings with the line of our human philosophy can reach. They are reasons which we are by no means wont to think of. They refuse to come under the head either of retribution for sin, or directly of discipline and correction, bearing toward moral culture—although it may be presumed that, in a case of this sort, the Lord would make the trial subserve in the end very useful results for his afflicted, suffering child.

In the light of this case it may be suggested that reasons somewhat analogous may often be at the bottom of God's permission of great suffering upon the best of men. If the purpose be not so directly as here to confound Satan, it may be to furnish instructive illustrations of the riches of grace. The sufferer may be thrown into the furnace, not so much to make *him* more pure, as to show what grace has wrought, and what it can and may achieve in human souls toward sweet submission and patient endurance under the afflictive hand of God. To such manifestations of what grace can do, God is often pleased to appeal as a witnessing testimony for the encouragement of others under similar trials. “Ye have heard

of the patience of Job (said James, 5 : 11), and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." If Job could have foreseen what use the Lord purposed to make and actually did make of his case, it would have relieved some of his most painful perplexities; would have satisfied him that God knew what himself was doing and had wise and good ends to secure, in ways to Job most inscrutable. The very darkness and inscrutability (we may remember) constituted in large measure the fearful, almost unendurable, severity of the trial. It was mainly these elements in it which gave it so great moral value as a discipline to Job and an example to all suffering saints from that day to the end of time.—But the point I specially make now is that the case of Job as set forth in the historic introduction, representing it as a test-issue between God and Satan, enlarges the field within which God's ultimate reasons may lie for permitting sore afflictions upon the best of Christians. It suffices also to suggest that inasmuch as here is one reason which certainly lies outside the range of human observation, there may be other reasons equally beyond our recognition, yet in the eye of God, supremely worthy and wise. From this case let us learn the lesson of sweet confidence in God that he doeth all things well and never permits any thing, however mysterious or dark to us, without reasons that will bear the light when he lets the light in. In brief, the moral lesson is—commit all these dark problems to God and bow to his will in patient suffering *without knowing the reason why the suffering comes*.

In this connection, the word "sovereignty" has been often applied to God as well representing that great element in his character and government before which suffering human souls should bow in reverence and submission. To some this word has been sweetly refreshing; to others, painfully bewildering—the difference being due somewhat to a radical difference of heart as to deep confidence in the wisdom and love of God, and in part also to the different senses given to the word itself. The word is sometimes understood to imply that God's purposes are arbitrary, resting on no reasons whatever save the dictates of his infinite will. This notion is both false and mischievous, utterly misrepresenting the Most High. Far better is the view put tersely by Dr. Payson—"The will of God is infinite reason." The special reasons for his divine purposes may be—often will be—far too deep for our short line to fathom—may and often will lie where

no human eye has penetrated ; but they are none the less *reasons* ; sound, strong, valid reasons for the decision which rests upon them. Reasons which are above and beyond the narrow horizon of our view are not on this account the less weighty and worthy.—It ought to be very clear to our thought that God must know more than man and be better able to rule the universe wisely and well. Let us then not allow ourselves to be tempted and pained under the notion that God's plans and ways are shaped without reason, under the impulses of a blind sovereignty. Rather let us believe, to our inexpressible peace and joy that all his ways rest on infinite reason. Let the word "Sovereignty," if we think best to use it of God, signify to us, not that He works without reason but that his reasons grasp the universe, sweep eternity, and must evolve in the end the highest, noblest, most glorious results possible to infinite wisdom, love and power.

Applied to the special case now in hand, the sufferings that God permitted Satan to inflict on Job were indeed to him utterly mysterious and painfully perplexing. They seemed to be in conflict with both goodness and justice. It was apparently very clear to Job's thought that these sufferings were not only without reason but against reason. So it appeared, as seen and judged of upon the grounds that lay within the horizon of his limited vision. But there were great reasons lying entirely beyond this narrow horizon. *Job was "a spectacle to angels."* He did not know it, but it was none the less true. Angels unfallen and angels fallen also, were witnesses to his godly life and to this terrible strain brought upon his tempted, tried spirit by the shock of those appalling calamities. They saw also the far more terrible perplexities into which his stricken soul was thrown by the thought that God had turned against him and become his enemy for reasons he could not begin to fathom. In the end they saw, to the joy of all the holy and to the confusion and shame of Satan and all his sympathizers, that God does "feed the strength of every saint ;" that his hand underneath is mighty to save ; and that the way up from the depth of earthly suffering is into peace and rest and blessedness.

It is something to have learned, as we have in this book of Job, the practical bearings of the great fact that "we are a spectacle to angels," albeit they are not as yet in any such sense a spectacle to us. It should be a quickening inspiration to us in breasting the surges of life here, that eyes far beyond the sky are looking down upon us ; that "we are

compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses ;" and that our struggling and conquering faith in God is accepted by those witnessing spirits as a glorious testimony to the power of the Spirit of God working in human souls toward holiness, and uplifting the tempted and faltering into the triumph of victory.

2. A second incidental lesson to be learned from the story and the discussions in this book is the immense mischief which comes of assuming that the sufferings of professedly good men are wholly and only *retributive*—the real punishment of their sins ; and are therefore a true index and measure of their guilt. This, we have seen, was the doctrine of Job's three friends. We have seen how it crushed out their confidence in his piety ; shut them up to the conclusion that so far from being a suffering child of God, he was one of the most guilty of all sinners ; and thus, by natural consequence, dried up not only their religious but their human sympathies, so that they seem to have looked without the least fellow-feeling or pity upon his terrible sufferings and the utter wreck of all his prosperity. Who can read this record of heartless reproaches and cruel insinuations and even the most slanderous and groundless charges of overt sin, without being shocked at man's inhumanity to man ! Yet these three men were, presumably, excellent and estimable men as they stood in human view before these developments. This strange inhumanity was the legitimate fruit of their bad theology. It came as a logical deduction from their false premises. They were sure they had the secret of Job's dreadful sufferings, and therefore deemed it their duty to rebuke him with this cruel sharpness as the only hopeful means in their view of bringing him to repentance. They felt bound to tell him, and even to prove it to him, that God was turned against him—that God was putting the fiery finger of his judgments upon Job's great sins. On their theology they assumed that they were doing God service in their co-operation with his endeavor to save Job's soul by pressing his conscience into a sense of his great sin.

When in the issue God expressed his strong disapprobation of what they had spoken (42 : 7, 8), it is left perhaps in some doubt whether he more condemned their bad *theology*, or the bad *spirit* which it begat in their heart toward Job. No doubt both were offensive in his sight. Their theology, God could in no wise indorse ; their bad spirit (I think we must assume) was yet more abhorrent to the pitying love of

the Great Father. We shall readily recall the fact that when Jesus came among men in the flesh, he found this same doctrine somewhat current; met it on several occasions, yet never without pronouncing against it his unqualified condemnation. To those who told him of "certain Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices" (Luke 13: 1-5), he answered—"Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you nay." "Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you nay."—To the question put by his disciples, upon the case of congenital blindness; "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind"? He answered, *Neither*. "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents"—so that this blindness can be reckoned as a judgment upon them for the sin (John 9: 2, 3). Thus without the least qualification did Jesus reprobate this doctrine that special calamities befall men in this world in punishment for special sins.

3. I call up for further consideration a point suggested in my discussion of the remarkable passage (19: 25-27); "I know that my Redeemer liveth"—viz., *the inexpressible value toward the religious life, of the early promise of a Messiah*. If I am right in the opinion that it was the rays (though few and dim) of this glorious promise that fell on the otherwise dark, desolate, disconsolate soul of this great sufferer, and inspired this outburst of triumphant faith, forming the grand crisis of his inward struggle, then we have here a magnificent illustration of the preciousness of that primal promise. Nor should the fact of its supreme importance toward faith in God surprise us. For it revealed far more of God's love and pity for lost men than could have been known otherwise. What the actual coming of Jesus in human flesh was to his generation and has been to all generations since, as a manifestation of God's love, surpassing all others immeasurably, it was in embryo to the saints of all preceding ages, through the power of this foregoing promise. When we search the earlier records of the Old Testament for Messianic prophecies and find them so very few in number, and even these few appearing to our eye somewhat indefinite, not to say tame, compared with what the New Testament reveals, it may seem to us that such promises and predictions can not have amounted to much. It strikes us perhaps that our notions of the Messiah would be very meager and by no means inspiring to faith

and hope if we had nothing more. But this reasoning badly under-rates the power and preciousness of even those few and dim rays of foregoing gospel promise. It was every thing to the struggling faith of those early ages to have even so much light from heaven. It bore unmistakable testimony that our race were *not* hopelessly doomed like those angels who "kept not their first estate." It witnessed that God had great, deep thoughts of mercy for our fallen world. It whispered of love and pity and of promised help upward toward acceptance before God and toward penitence, purity and salvation.—As to the actual impression made by these promises upon the saints of those early ages, we shall greatly under-estimate it if we infer from the little they say of their experience under this revealed truth, that it scarcely raised a ripple of feeling, or helped them appreciably toward a steadfast faith. True, their utterances of personal experience are less full than perhaps we might expect; but when we turn to the New Testament allusions to the subject, we are struck with the estimate given us there. Hear what Jesus himself said of Abraham: "He rejoiced to see my day" (hailing it as one hails a distant friend with exultant shouts of joy); "and he saw it and was glad" (John 8: 56). Or what he said not of Abraham alone, but of very many others:—"I say unto you that many prophets and kings *have desired* to see the things which ye see, but have not seen them" (Luke 10: 26). Or let one read the testimony from Heb. 11, of the power of faith in those ancient moral heroes, and not least, of Moses who "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt"—(Heb. 11: 24-26).—These allusions show that those early promises of the Messiah to come were far from being tame, uninspiring and ineffective. The reference to Moses proves that he knew these promises and felt their power *before* he fled from the court of Pharaoh into Arabia, and consequently *before* he wrote the book of Job—supposing him to have been its author.

To Job, if I interpret his words truly, these promises of a Messiah were as life from the dead. They spake to him of God, as nothing else had done—as nothing else could do. In the hour when flesh and heart failed him; when not a human friend stood by him, when in fact every one of them rose up against him and had almost swallowed him up; then this great promise spake to him of God and lifted his soul from a point, scarcely above despair, into the calmness of trust, and the exultation of victory.

NEW TRANSLATION.*

CHAPTER I.

1. THERE was a man in the Land of Uz whose name was Job; this man was perfect and upright, one who feared God and shunned evil. 2. There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. 3. His possessions were seven thousand sheep; three thousand camels; five hundred yoke of oxen; five hundred she-asses; and a very large family of servants; so that this man was wealthy above all the children of the East. 4. And his sons went and made a feast in each one's house on his birthday; and they sent and invited their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5. Now when they had gone round these birthday festivals, Job sent and sanctified them, and rose early in the morning and offered sacrifices according to their number; for Job said—Perhaps my sons have sinned and bid farewell to God in their hearts. So did Job from year to year.

6. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to

* The common doctrine in respect to translations from the Hebrew demands that each Hebrew word or phrase should be represented by its nearest equivalent in English. This rule must sometimes be relaxed to meet special idioms of the Hebrew tongue which have no precise equivalents in our own. A yet more important deviation from the rule of a "word for word" translation has seemed to me demanded in this Book of Job for the sake of the logical relations of the several clauses to each other and to the main argument. The speeches which make up the body of this book are in purpose and aim argumentative, yet often their logical relations are liable to be overlooked. For the purpose of making them clear I have allowed myself to introduce in brackets some connecting and explanatory words or clauses.

present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came in the midst of them. 7. And the Lord said to Satan, Whence comest thou? Satan answered the Lord and said, From roaming over the earth and from walking about in it. 8. And the Lord said to Satan, Hast thou set thy thought on my servant Job, for there is none like him in the earth, a man perfect and upright, fearing God and shunning evil? 9. Then Satan answered the Lord and said, Does Job fear God for nought? 10. Hast thou not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has? The work of his hands thou hast blessed, and his cattle are spread abroad over the land. 11. But put forth now thy hand and touch all his possessions, and he will surely say thee farewell to thy face. 12. And the Lord said to Satan, Behold all he has is in thy power, only upon himself lay not thy hand. Then Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

13. And there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house; 14. And a messenger came to Job and said; The cattle were plowing and the asses feeding by their side; 15. And the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away, and the young men have they smitten with the edge of the sword, and I only have escaped alone to tell thee. 16. While he was yet speaking, another came and said: The fire of God [lightning] fell from heaven and burned the sheep and the young men and consumed them, and I only have escaped alone to tell thee. 17. While he was yet speaking, another came and said, The Chaldeans formed three bands and rushed upon the camels and took them, and smote the young men with the edge of the sword, and I only have escaped alone to tell thee. 18. While he was yet speaking, another came and said, Thy sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house; 19. And lo, a great wind-storm swept across the desert and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead, and I only have escaped alone to tell thee.

20. Then Job arose and rent his mantle and shaved his head and fell to the ground and worshiped; 21. And said, Naked came I forth from the womb of my mother, and naked shall I return to my mother earth. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord! 22. In all this Job did not sin nor impute folly to God.

CHAPTER II.

1. Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came in the midst of them to present himself before the Lord.

2. The Lord said to Satan, Whence comest thou? Satan answered and said, From roaming over the earth and from walking about in it.

3. And the Lord said to Satan, Hast thou set thy thought on my servant Job, for there is none like him in the earth, a man perfect and upright, fearing God and shunning evil? And he holds fast his integrity still, though thou hast moved me against him to destroy him without cause.

4. Satan answered the Lord and said, Skin for skin; even all a man has he will give for his life.

5. But put forth now thy hand and touch his bone and his flesh and he will certainly say thee farewell to thy face.

6. And the Lord said to Satan, Behold, he is in thy hand, only spare his life.

7. Then Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with burning ulcers [the black leprosy] from the sole of his foot to his crown.

8. And Job took a potsherd to scrape himself with it, and sat down in the ashes.

9. Then said his wife to him, Dost thou hold fast thine integrity still? Bid farewell to *God and die!*

10. But Job said to her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women.

What! shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? In all this Job sinned not with his lips.

11. When Job's three friends heard of all this affliction that had befallen him, they came each from his home, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite; for they met by appointment to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

12. When they saw him from a distance and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices in loud weeping, and rent each one his mantle and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven.

13. Then they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and not one spake a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great.

CHAPTER III.

1. After this Job opened his mouth and cursed his birthday. 2. He spake and said:

3. Let the day perish in which I was born, and the night which said, A man-child is brought forth. 4. That day—let it be darkness; let not God from above inquire for it; let no light shine forth upon it: 5. Let darkness and death-shade claim it as their own; let clouds dwell upon it and eclipses of day strike terror through it. 6. That night—let darkness seize it; let it not rejoice among the days of the year, nor come into the number of its months. 7. Lo, let that night be sterile, and no voice of joy break forth therein. 8. Let those who curse days curse this day—who have skill to excite to frenzy the crooked serpent. 9. Let the stars of its twilight be dark; let it wait for light, and there be none; let it never look forth through the eye-lids of the dawn, 10. Because it did not close the doors of my mother's womb, and so hide sorrow from my eyes. 11. Why did I not die from the womb? Why did I not expire at my very birth? 12. Why was a mother's lap provided to receive me, and her breasts that I might suck? 13. For then [in that case] I should have lain still and been quiet; I should have slept, and have been at rest; 14. With kings and counsellors of the earth who build for themselves vast ruins; 15. Or with princes who have gold, who fill their houses with silver; 16. Or as one still-born I had not been, as still-born infants that never see light. 17. There the wicked cease from troubling and there the weary are at rest. 18. Captives [slaves] are all quiet there; they hear no voice of the driver. 19. The small and the great are there; the slave is free from his master.

20. Why is light given to the eyes of the wretched and life to the bitter of soul; 21. Who long for death and it is not—who dig for it more than for hid treasures; 22. Who rejoice even to exultation and are glad when they find the grave? 23. To the man whose life-path is darkened and whom God hedges in round about? 24. For my sighings come before my bread and my groans are poured out as the waters. 25. For what I feared has come upon me, and what I dreaded has befallen me. 26. I was not in peace nor in quiet; I had no rest: yet then trouble came.

CHAPTER IV.

First speech of Eliphaz.

1. Then Eliphaz the Temanite took up the case and said; 2. Should one try a word with thee, wilt thou take it ill? But restrain his words, who can? 3. Behold, thou hast instructed many, and weak hands thou hast strengthened. 4. The tottering one thy words have upheld, and trembling knees thou hast made strong. 5. But now it has come upon thyself and thou hast fainted; it touches thee and thou art confounded. 6. Has not thy piety been thy confidence, and the integrity of thy ways been thy ground of hope? 7. But I pray thee, recall to mind, What innocent man has ever perished? and where have the upright been cut off? 8. Even as I have seen; They that plow iniquity and sow misery are sure to reap it. 9. Before the breath of God they perish; before the blast of his indignation they are consumed. 10. The roaring of the lion, the voice of the roaring one, the teeth of the young lion, are broken. 11. The strong lion perisheth for lack of food; the whelps of the lioness are scattered abroad.

12. A word stole silently upon me; mine ear caught a whisper of it; 13. In thoughts from visions of the night when deep sleep falls upon men, 14. Fear seized me and trembling, and it shook all my bones. 15. A spirit passed before me; the hair of my body stood erect. 16. There the spirit stood; I could not trace its form; an image was before me, and silence;—then I heard a voice: 17. Shall man be more just than God? Shall even a mighty man be more pure than his Maker? 18. Behold, he does not confide in his saints; and he imputes to his angels folly: 19. How much more to those who dwell in houses of clay whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed like the moth! 20. From a morning to an evening they are crushed utterly; they perish forever and no one regards it. 21. Does not their glory pass away [as the moving caravans of the desert]? They die, and there is no wisdom!

CHAPTER V.

Eliphaz concludes his speech.

1. Call now, if there be one to answer thee; To whom of the holy wilt thou turn? 2. For wrath kills the fools, and envy slays the silly. 3. I have seen the fool taking root; but suddenly I pronounced his dwelling-place accursed. 4. His sons were far from being prosperous; they were crushed in the gate [before the courts] and there was none to deliver: 5. Whose harvests the famished devour; despite the thorn-hedge, he will seize it; the snare opens wide its jaws for his wealth. 6. For calamity comes not out of the dust, nor does trouble spring up from the ground; 7. For man is born to trouble, and sparks mount upward flying.

8. But for myself, I would seek the Almighty; I would commit my cause to God; 9. Who does things great and unsearchable—even marvellous things without number; 10. Who gives rain upon the earth and sends waters upon the fields; 11. So that he sets the humble on high and mourners are exalted to safety. 12. He frustrates the schemes of the crafty, and their hands can not work out their thought. 13. He takes captive the wise in their cunning, and the counsels of the perverse are borne headlong. 14. Even in broad day they plunge into darkness, and grope at noon as if it were night. 15. But He [God] saves the victim of wrong from their jaws—the poor from the hand of the strong. 16. So there is hope for the poor, and iniquity shuts her mouth.

17. Behold, how blessed is the man whom God correcteth! Therefore, despise not the chastening of the Almighty: 18. For he gives pain and then healing; he smites and then his hand restores. 19. In six troubles he will deliver thee; in seven, no evil shall touch thee. 20. In famine he redeems thee from death; in war, from the thrust of the sword. 21. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue, nor shalt thou fear when destruction comes. 22. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh, and from the beasts of the field, fear thou nothing. 23. For with the stones of the field thou art in covenant, and the beasts of the field shall have peace with thee. 24. Thou shalt know that thy tent is safe; thou shalt visit thy sheep-fold and shalt miss none [of them]. 25. Thou shalt know that thy children are many—thy offspring as the grass of the earth. 26. Thou shalt come to thy grave in

ripeness, as the full sheaf is gathered in its time. 27. Lo, all this have we searched out; it is even so; hear and learn it for thyself.



CHAPTER VI.

Job replies.

1. Then Job answered and said; 2. Oh that my griefs were weighed thoroughly, and my afflictions put on the scales together! 3. For now they would be heavier than the sand of the sea. For this reason it is that my words have been rash. 4. For the arrows of the Almighty are deep within me, the poison of which is drinking up my spirit: the terrors of God array themselves against me. 5. Does the wild ass bray over his green grass? or does the ox low over his fodder? 6. Shall tasteless food be eaten without salt? And is there any relish in purslain slime? 7. So my soul refuses to touch! They are as food that I loathe.

8. Oh that the thing I ask might come; that God would grant to me my longing desire! 9. That God would consent and break me in pieces—that he would let go his hand and cut me off! 10. Then should it be my comfort, and under pang that spare not I would exult that I have not denied the words of the Holy One. 11. What is my strength that I should yet hope? and what is my limit of endurance that I should prolong my life? 12. Is my strength the strength of stones, and is my flesh brass? 13. Is not help in myself utterly wanting and all hope of recovery driven away from me? 14. A broken-down man should have pity from his friend;—else he forsakes the fear of the Almighty [real piety.]

15. My brethren have disappointed me like a brook—as the valley-torrents that soon flow off; 16. Which are turbid from the melting ice, in which the snow hides itself: 17. But when then they have poured themselves off in floods, they disappear; under the summer's heat they are dried up from their place. 18. The caravans turn aside into those old water-courses; they follow them up to find them only a desolation—and so they perish! 19. The caravans of Tema had looked; the traveling companies of Sheba had hoped for

water there. 20. They were put to shame because they had trusted; they came to it [where water should have been] and were confounded. 21. So ye too have now become nothing; ye have seen a terror and are panic-smitten.

22. Is it that I have said—Make me a gift? bestow of your wealth for my sake? 23. Or, deliver me from an enemy's hand? or redeem me from the hand of the mighty? 24. Teach me, and I will be silent; make me understand in what I have erred. 25. How forcible are right words! But what does your upbraiding prove? 26. Do ye think to rebuke mere words, when the words of one in despair are but wind? 27. Indeed ye might [as well] east lots for the orphan or dig a pit for your friend! 28. But now, consent; yield to me; it is before your face if I speak falsely. 29. Return, I pray you; let there be no perverseness. Turn yet again; my righteousness is in the case. 30. Is there perverseness in my tongue? Does not my moral sense discern wrong?



CHAPTER VII.

Job concludes.

1. Is not man's term of service short on the earth? and his days as those of an hireling? 2. As the servant longs for the lengthening shadows and the hireling waits for his wages; 3. So am I made to inherit months of vanity, and nights of trouble are my lot. 4. If I lie down I say, When shall I arise and the night be gone? I am wearied with tossings about till the dawn of morning. 5. My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of earth; my skin cracks and suppurates. 6. My days are swifter than a shuttle and pass away with no hope. 7. Oh remember that my life is but a breath; my eye shall no more see good. 8. The eye that has seen me shall see me no more; while thine eyes are yet on me, I am not! 9. As the cloud is consumed and passes away, so one goes down to the grave, but comes not again. 10. He returns no more to his house; his place will know him no more.

11. As for me, I will not shut my mouth; let me express the anguish of my spirit: let me speak in the bitterness of my

soul! 12. Am I like the sea, or a sea-monster, that thou shouldest set a watch over me? 13. When I say—My couch shall give me comfort; my bed will relieve my complaint; 14. Then thou dost frighten me with dreams and terrify me by night-visions; 15. So that my soul chooses strangling and death rather than these bones. 16. I am wasting away; I shall not live always; desist from me, for my days are only a breath. 17. What is frail man that thou shouldest make so great account of him and set thy sharp thought upon him? 18. That thou shouldest look after him every morning and put him to stern trial every moment? 19. How long wilt thou never even look off from me nor let me alone till I can swallow my spittle? 20. Be it so that I have sinned; What shall I do to Thee, O thou Observer of men? Why hast Thou set me as thy mark [target] so that I am a burden to myself? 21. Why dost Thou not pardon my transgression and put away my sin?—for now [so soon] I shall sleep in the dust; Thou shalt seek me early [earnestly]—but I shall not be.



CHAPTER VIII.

First speech of Bildad.

1. Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said, 2. How long wilt thou speak these things, and the words of thy mouth be a gusty wind? 3. Will God pervert judgment? Will the Almighty pervert justice? 4. If thy sons have sinned against him and he have put them in the [avenging] hand of their transgression; 5. Even then, if thou wouldest seek God earnestly and lift thy prayer to the Almighty, 6. And if moreover, thou thyself wert pure and upright, surely even now, he would rouse himself in thy behalf and give peace to thy righteous dwelling. 7. Thy beginning might be small, but thy latter end would be very great.

8. For ask, I pray thee, of the earliest generations [of men] and set thyself to inquire of their fathers; 9. (For we are of yesterday and know nothing, for our days on earth are but a shadow:) 10. Will not they teach thee and speak to thee and their words come forth from their heart? 11. Will the papyrus [paper-rush] grow up without marshy soil? will

the flag [of Egypt] become tall without water? 12. While still in its greenness and not cut off, yet [without water] it will wither before all herbs. 13. So are the paths of all that forget God! The hope of the godless must perish: 14. Whose hope shall be cut off and his trust be as the spider's web. 15. He shall lean upon his house, but it will not stand; he will grasp it strongly but it will not be firm. 16. Green is he before the sun, and his shoot springs up in his garden. 17. His roots entwine round the heap [of stones] and strike firmly into the stony soil; 18. But when destruction swallows him up from his place, this place itself shall deny him and say, I have never seen thee.

19. Behold, such as this is the joy of his life-course! From the soil other [and better] men spring up [to fill his place].

20. Behold, God will not spurn the perfect man, nor will he make strong the hand of evil-doers: 21. Until he fill thy mouth with laughter and thy lips with shouts of joy. 22. Thy haters shall be clothed with shame. As for the tent of the wicked, it is not!



CHAPTER IX.

Job commences his reply to Bildad.

1. Job answered and said; 2. Verily, I know it is even so. How shall man be just with God? 3. If God be pleased to contend with him, he can not answer to one count out of a thousand. 4. Wise of heart is he and mighty in power: who has ever hardened himself against God, and yet prospered? 5. Who displaces the mountains ere they are aware of it; who overturns them in his wrath; 6. Who hurls the earth trembling out of her place, and her very pillars are shaken; 7. Who speaks to the sun and it shines not, and seals up the face of the stars; 8. Who spreads out the heavens alone and walks upon the heights of the sea; 9. Who made Arcturus, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south; 10. Who does great things until there is no searching them out, and things wonderful, till none can number them. 11. Lo, he passes before me, but I see him not: He moves along, I can not discern him. 12. Lo, he seizes like the lion; who can resist him? Who shall say to him, What doest Thou? 13. God will not turn back

his anger : the proud helpers [of the wicked] are prostrated. 14. How much less shall such an one as I make answer before him and choose out my words with him?—15. As to whom, if my cause were just, I would not even attempt to answer, but would make supplication to my Judge. 16. If I were to summon him [as in a legal prosecution] and he were to answer, I could not believe he had heard my voice; 17. He, who rushes on me as a tempest and multiplies his inflictions upon me for no [apparent] cause. 18. He does not let me take breath, but fills me full of bitter pains. 19. If as to strength—lo, He is mighty : if as to judicial trial, who will join issue with me before the court? 20. If I were righteous, my mouth would condemn me ; perfect I—then he holds me guilty : 21. Perfect I—I should deem my soul of small account ;—my life, of little worth. 22. This one thing is certain, therefore I have said it :—He is destroying [alike] the perfect and the wicked. 23. If the scourge slay suddenly, he [seems to] mock at the trial of the innocent. 24. The earth is given over into the hand of wicked men ; the faces of its judges he veils ; if this be not [God], who is it? 25. My days are swifter than a runner ; they have fled away and seen no good. 26. They have swept by like the reed-skiffs [on the Nile]—like the eagle pouncing on his prey. 27. If I say—Let me forget my sighs ; let me put off this sad face and put on a brighter one ; 28. Then I shudder under all my pains ; I know thou wilt not acquit me. 29. I at least am held guilty ; what avails it then that I labor in vain? 30. If I wash myself in snow-water and cleanse my hands with alkali ; 31. Even then thou wilt plunge me into the pit, and my very clothes will abhor me ! 32. For He is not a man, as I, that I should answer him and that we should come together into court for trial. 33. There is no mediator between us who shall lay his hand upon us both. 34. Let him lift his rod from upon me ; let not his terrors chill me with horror ;—35. Then would I speak and I would not fear him ; but not such is my case in my view.

 CHAPTER X.

Job's speech concluded.

1. My soul is weary of living ; let me give scope to my complaint ; let me speak in the bitterness of my soul. 2. Let

me say to God, Do not condemn me; let me know why thou dost contend with me. 3. Is it a good to thee that thou shouldest oppress and care little for one who is the work of thy hands, and shouldest shine upon the counsel of the wicked? 4. Hast thou eyes of flesh? dost thou see as man does? 5. Are thy days like man's days? and thy years as the days of man, 6. That thou shouldest seek for my iniquity and search into my sin? 7. Although thou knowest I am not wicked, and there is none to deliver from thy hand. 8. Thy hands have formed and made me in every part; and then thou hast destroyed me. 9. Oh remember that thou hast formed me as the clay [is molded], and wilt thou resolve me back to dust? 10. Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me as cheese? 11. Clothed me with skin and flesh and interlaced my frame with bones and sinews? 12. Life and mercy hast thou granted me, and thy kind providence has guarded my spirit. 13. These things have been deep in thy heart; I know this is with thee. 14. If I have sinned thou hast watched me, and of my sin thou dost not hold me innocent. 15. If I am wicked, wo unto me! if righteous, I would not lift up my head—full of confusion, keenly feeling my affliction. 16. Then, should my head rise to view, thou wilt hunt me as the fierce lion, and again thou wilt deal strangely with me. 17. Thou bringest fresh witnesses against me—dost multiply thy visitations of wrath, host after host, upon me.

18. Why didst thou give me birth from the womb? Would I had breathed out my life and no eye had ever seen me! 19. Then I should be as if I had never been—borne from the womb to the grave. 20. Are not my days few? Cease then and lift from me thy hand, that my face may brighten a little while—21. Ere yet I go whence I shall not return—to a land of darkness and death-shade: 22. A land all dark as the darkness of the shadow of death; and no order is there, and it shines only as very darkness.



CHAPTER XI.

First speech of Zophar.

1. Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said, 2. Shall a multitude of words be deemed unanswerable? and

shall a man of much talk be accounted just? 3. Shall thy vain boasts silence all reply, so that thou mayest mock on and there be none to put thee to shame? 4. And thou mayest say, My doctrine is pure, and I have been spotless in thine eyes? 5. But O that God would speak and would open his lips with thee; 6. And would show thee the unseen things of his wisdom, for there are complications—[deep enfoldings], in his counsels. Moreover, know thou that God has not remembered against thee *all* thy sins.

7. Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to the uttermost end? 8. They [the things of *God*] are heights of heaven:—what canst thou do?—more deep than hell; what canst thou know? 9. Their measures are longer than the earth and broader than the sea. 10. If he arrest [for trial] and imprison, and then summon before his bar, who can answer [to his indictment]? 11. For *He*, at least, knows men of vanity most thoroughly, and consequently he sees all sin, though he may seem not to notice it.

12. Now man void of heart, has no understanding; as a foal of the wild ass is frail man born. 13. And yet, if thou shalt diligently prepare thine heart and stretch out unto him thy hands; 14. And then if there be iniquity in thy hand, thou shalt put it far away and not let wickedness dwell in thy tents; 15. Then surely thou mightest lift up thy face without spot; thou shalt be calmly trustful and have no fear; 16. For even *thou* shouldest forget thy sorrows, or shouldest remember them only as water-floods that have gone by forever. 17. Brighter than noon shall thy new life arise; the [former] darkness shall become as the morning. 18. And thou shalt be trustful, for there shall be good ground for hope; thou shalt search carefully and lie down in safety. 19. As the herds in their field shalt thou repose and there be none to alarm. Many shall propitiate thy favor. 20. But the eyes of the wicked waste away [in disappointed hope]; all refuge perishes, and their hope is as the breathing out of the spirit [in death].

CHAPTER XII.

Job commences his reply.

1. Then Job answered and said, 2. Doubtless ye are the people, and with you must wisdom die! 3. But I also have some heart as well as yourselves; I am not more fallen than ye; and indeed with whom are not such things as these? 4. Yet I am as one mocked of his neighbor—even I who call upon God, and he answers. The just, upright man is an object of scorn! 5. There is contempt for misfortune in the thought of one at ease—contempt ready for those whose feet are sliding.

6. The tents of highway robbers have prosperity; all secure are these men who most recklessly provoke God's wrath, to whom God himself awards earthly good with his full hand. 7. But ask now the beasts, and they will teach thee; or the fowls of heaven, and they will show thee; 8. Or speak to the earth, and it will teach thee; and the fish of the sea will rehearse it to thee. 9. By all these [witnesses] who does not learn that the hand of Jehovah doeth this? 10. In whose hand is the soul of every living one and the spirit of all human flesh.

11. Does not the ear try words even as the mouth tastes its food? 12. With the ancients [ye say] is wisdom; with those of many days is understanding. 13. Rather, with *Him* [the Great God] are wisdom and might; he has counsel and understanding. 14. Behold, he throws down, and it can not be built up; he shuts down upon man, and there shall be no opening. 15. Lo, he withholds the waters, and they dry away; or he sends them forth, and they desolate the land. 16. With him are strength and wisdom; in his hand are both deceiver and deceived. 17. He brings out wise men despoiled and makes judges fools. 18. He unlooses the girdle of kings, and again, he binds the girdle upon their loins. 19. He brings out priests despoiled, and overthrows the mighty. 20. He withdraws the power of the lip from men most trusted; the discernment of the aged he takes away. 21. He pours contempt upon princes and loosens the girdle of the mighty. 22. Deep things God brings up out of darkness; the shadow of death, he brings forth into the light. 23. He lifts nations on high, and again he destroys them: he enlarges their borders, and again leads them into

captivity. 24. He takes wisdom away from the princes of all the nations of the earth, and makes them wander in desolate untrodden paths. 25. They grope in darkness with no light; he makes them reel like the drunkard.



CHAPTER XIII.

Job's speech continued.

1. Lo, all this has my eye seen, and my ear has heard and understood it. 2. As ye know, so also have I known; I am not more fallen than ye are. 3. But verily, I for my part would speak to the Almighty; I long to debate my cause with God. 4. But ye, for your part, are forgers of lies; miserable botchers are ye all. 5. Oh, that ye would be entirely silent, and let this be your wisdom. 6. I pray you, hear my argument; give ear to the pleadings of my lips. 7. Will ye speak for God perversely? and speak in his behalf deceitfully? 8. Will ye accept his person and so contend for God? 9. Would it be well for you that he should search you out? as one deals deceitfully with man, will ye deal deceitfully with him? 10. He will rebuke you severely if ye covertly accept persons. 11. Shall not his excellency make you afraid? and a dread of him fall upon you? 12. Your most remembered sayings are like ash-heaps; your towers of argument like towers of clay. 13. Cease to interrupt me; let me have scope to speak; and then let any thing come down on me! 14. *For* what do I take my flesh in my teeth and put my life in my hand? 15. Behold, he will slay me: I can not hope [for any thing less], yet I will defend my ways before him. 16. And indeed, he is my salvation, for the bold sinner shall not come into his presence.

17. Hear my words attentively and my declaration with your ears. 18. Behold now, I have set my cause in order [for defense]; I know that I am just [as to the charge against me]. 19. Who is he that can plead [to purpose] against me? for in that case I would hold my peace and die! 20. Only, do not thou with me these two things; then would I not hide my face from before thee. 21. Take off thy heavy hand from me and let not thy terrors affright me; 22. Thou call and I will answer; or let me speak [first], and thou respond to

me. 23. Like what [of what sort] are my iniquities and sins? Make me know my transgression and my sin. 24. Why dost thou hide thy face and account me an enemy to thyself? 25. Wilt thou smite with terror the driven leaf and chase the dry stubble? 26. For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me inherit the sins of my youth. 27. Thou dost set my feet in stocks and watch all my paths; thou hast cut a trench around the soles of my feet. 28. And he [this great sufferer] will waste away as a thing rotten—as a garment the moth has eaten through.



CHAPTER XIV.

Job closes his reply.

1. Frail man, of woman born, is of few days and full of trouble. 2. He shoots up as a flower and is then cut down; he flees fast as the lengthening shadow, and will never stand. 3. Is it upon such an one thou openest thine eyes, and dost thou bring me into judgment with thyself? 4. Who can bring a clean one from an unclean? Not one. 5. Inasmuch as his days are determined and the number of his months is in thy control, thou hast set his limit and he shall never pass it; 6. Turn thine eye from him that he may rest until he shall have enjoyed his day as a hireling. 7. Because there is hope for a tree that though cut down, it will yet sprout and its shoot will not utterly perish; 8. And though its root become old in the earth and its stump die in the soil; 9. Yet, from the scent of water, it will send forth buds again and produce boughs like a plant. 10. But the strong man will die and then waste utterly away; frail man of earth expires—and where is he? 11. Waters fail from the pools [of the desert]; the river-flood subsides and becomes dry; 12. And man lies down and will not arise; till the heavens be no more they will not awake and will not be roused from their sleep. 13. Oh that thou wouldest hide me in the under-world and cover me until thy wrath be past! that thou wouldest appoint me a time and remember me! 14. If man dies, will he live again? All the days of my war-service will I wait till my release come. 15. Then thou wilt

call and I will answer thee. Thou wilt have a longing desire toward the work of thy hands. 16. For now thou dost number my steps. Dost thou not watch for my sin? 17. My transgression is sealed up as in a bag, and then thou sowest up mine iniquity. 18. Over against this, the mountain falling, comes to nought, and the rock is removed from his place. 19. Waters wear away the stones; its floods wash away the dust of the earth, and thou destroyest the hope of man. 20. Thou dost overpower him forever, and so he passes away; thou changest his countenance and dost send him forth. 21. His sons rise to honor, but he knows it not; or they become small, yet he perceives it not. 22. Only his flesh for itself shall have pain, and his soul for itself shall mourn.



CHAPTER XV.

Second speech of Eliphaz.

1. Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said, 2. Will a wise man answer with windy knowledge, and fill his belly with east wind storms? 3. Will he reason with words that avail nothing, and with speeches that profit not? 4. Verily, thou dost annul piety and restrain prayer before God: 5. For thy mouth carries with it thine iniquity, and thou choosest the tongue of the crafty. 6. Thine own mouth condemns thee—not I; and thy lips make answer against thee. 7. Wast thou the first man born—brought forth before the hills? 8. Wast thou a listener in the privy counsel of God? and dost thou restrict all wisdom to thyself? 9. What knowest thou and we know it not? or discern, and it is not with us? 10. On our side are gray-haired, aged men, having more weight of days than thy father.

11. Are the consolations of God too small for thee, even the word that was gentle with thee? 12. Why does thy heart sweep thee away? and why does thine eye twinkle with insolence? 13. That thy spirit should turn back upon God and thou shouldest dare to utter [such] words from thy mouth? 14. What is man that he should be pure? and one born of woman that he should be righteous? 15. Behold, he does not confide in his holy ones, and the heavens are

not pure in his eyes ! 16. How much more abominable and corrupt is man who drinks iniquity as water ! 17. Let me show thee : hearken thou to me : the things I have seen, let me rehearse ; 18. Which wise men, learning from their fathers, have told us and not concealed ; 19. To whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger had then passed among them. 20. [This they have taught:] The wicked man is in torment all his days, even all the years allotted to the oppressor. 21. A dreadful voice rings in his ear ; in his best prosperity, the spoiler comes down upon him. 22. He can have no hope of emerging from his darkness ; he is destined to the sword. 23. He wanders about for bread, saying, *Where?* He knows that the day of darkness is ready at his hand. 24. Trouble and anguish overpower him as a king equipped for battle. 25. For he lifts his hand defiantly toward God and boasts as one strong against the Almighty. 26. He runs upon him [God] with stiffened neck, even with the thick bosses of his own buckler. 27. For he has covered his face with his fatness and laid on fat upon his loins. 28. He dwells in cities blotted out ; in houses where no man lives, which are destined to be heaps of ruin. 29. He shall not enrich himself, nor shall his wealth abide, nor his possessions spread abroad in the land. 30. He shall not emerge from his darkness ; the flame shall wither his branch ; he shall pass away under the breath of his [Jehovah's] mouth. 31. Let him not trust in evil ; he deceives himself [if he does], for evil will become his retribution. 32. This shall be fulfilled ere his time ; his branch shall not even become green. 33. He shakes off his grapes yet unripe, as the vine, and casts his fruit-blossoms as the olive. 34. For the family of the sinner becomes desolate ; fire devours the tents of corruption. 35. They conceive mischief ; they bring forth calamity ; their belly prepares deceit.



CHAPTER XVI.

Job replies.

1. Job answered and said, 2. I have heard many things like these ; tormenting comforters are ye all. 3. Is there any [natural] end to words of wind ? or what excites thee to

answer [so]? 4. I too might speak as ye do ; if only your soul were in the place of mine, I might multiply speeches against you, and shake my head at you scornfully. 5. But I would rather give you moral strength with my mouth, and my lip-comforts should assuage. 6. But now if I speak, my grief is not assuaged ; if I desist, what goes from me? 7. Surely now hath he worn out my strength ; thou hast made all my household desolate. 8. He has fixed his grasp upon me ; this is in proof of it that my leanness stands forth against me and answers to my face. 9. His anger tears and then pursues me ; he gnashes his teeth on me ; my enemy makes his eye sharp upon me. 10. They have opened the mouth wide against me ; they have smitten my cheek reproachfully ; they fill out their battle array against me. 11. God hath given me over to the ungodly ; he hath cast me into the hands of the wicked. 12. I was living in peace ; but He [God] hath shattered me utterly ; he hath seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces and made me the target for his arrows. 13. His hosts beset me round ; he cleaves my reins and spares not ; he pours out my gall upon the ground. 14. He breaks me with breach upon breach ; he rushes on me like a giant. 15. Then I sowed sackcloth on my loins ; I thrust my horn into the dust. 16. My face is red with weeping ; on my eyelids rests the shadow of death. 17. Not for any violence of my hands ; my prayer also has been pure. 18. O earth, cover not my blood, and let there be no place for my cry [to be suppressed, unheard]. 19. Yet even now, behold, my witness is in heaven and my attestor is on high. 20. My mockers are these my [professed] friends ;—unto God [and to him only] my eye pours out its tears :—21. that one might plead for man with God, even as a mortal with his fellow-man. 22. When a few more years have passed, I shall go that way from which I shall return no more.

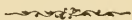
CHAPTER XVII.

Job concludes his speech.

1. My life-force is spent ; my days are extinct ; the grave awaits me. 2. If these men with me are not mockers [what are they]? Day and night I must see their insults ! 3. Lay

down now the pledge; give me a surety with thee: Who is he that will strike his hand with mine [for a hearing in court]? 4. For thou hast veiled their heart from wisdom; therefore thou wilt never exalt them [to honor]. 5. He who exposes his friends to the spoiler, his children's eyes shall pine away. 6. He has made me a by-word of the people—a man to be spit on in the face. 7. My eye is dim from grief; all my members are as a shadow. 8. At these things upright men will be amazed; yet will the good rouse himself against the wicked. 9. The righteous will hold on in his righteous way, and he of pure hands will wax stronger.

10. But now, return ye all, and come, I pray, [to review my case], for I find not a wise man among you. 11. [And soon, for] my days are past; my plans of life are frustrated—those dearest treasures of my heart. 12. They put [the elements of] night into my day; light is close before the face of darkness. 13. Lo, I wait but a little, and Sheol is my abode; I have spread my bed in its darkness. 14. To corruption I have said, Thou art my father; to the worm, my mother and sister art thou. 15. And where is now my hope? Yea, my hope—who shall see it? 16. My hopes go down to the bars of Sheol when there shall be rest [for my body] in the grave.



CHAPTER XVIII.

Second specch of Bildad.

1. Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said, 2. How long will ye make a hunt for words? Understand, and after that, let us speak.

3. Why are we regarded as brute-beasts, and accounted stupid in your eyes? 4. He is tearing himself in his rage! For thy sake shall the earth be forsaken and the foundation rocks be upturned from their place?

5. Verily the light of the wicked shall be put out; the flame of his fire shall not give light. 6. The light in his tent shall be darkness; his lamp suspended above shall be put out. 7. His strong steps shall be straitened: his own wisdom shall prove his downfall. 8. For he is cast into the

net with his feet ; he walks to and fro over snares. 9. The trap shall seize him by the heel ; the snare shall hold him fast. 10. The cord [for his foot] is hidden in the earth ; his snare is over his path. 11. Terrors affright him on every side and chase him close upon his heels. 12. His strength is famished [as from hunger] ; destruction is ready at his side. 13. It shall consume the portions of his skin ; even his bodily members shall the first-born of death consume. 14. He shall be torn out of his tent—his place of security ; thou wilt march him away to the king of terrors. 15. Others than his offspring shall dwell in his tent ; brimstone [like that on Sodom] shall be showered upon his dwelling. 16. From beneath, his root is withered ; from above, his branch is cut off. 17. All remembrance of him perishes from the earth ; he has no more a name on the face of the land. 18. They chase him from light into darkness, and drive him out of the inhabited world. 19. He has no offspring, no progeny among his people ; no survivor in his dwelling. 20. Those who come after will be amazed at his day [doom], and those who were before are stricken with horror. 21. Only such as these are the habitations of the wicked ; this is the doom of him who knows not God.

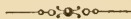


CHAPTER XIX.

Job replies.

1. Job answered and said, 2. How long will ye vex my very soul, and break me in pieces with your words ? 3. These ten times ye have reproached me ; shameless, ye misjudge me. 4. Be it so that I have erred ;—with myself my error abides. 5. If ye would indeed make yourselves strong against me, then prove against me your reproachful charges. 6. Know ye now that God hath wrested my cause ; he hath environed me with his net. 7. Behold, I cry out of cruel wrong, but I am not answered ; I cry aloud, but there is no justice [done me]. 8. My way he has walled up, and I can not pass on ; he has spread darkness on my path. 9. My glory he has stripped from me, and torn off the crown from my head. 10. He breaks me down on every side and I am gone ; my path is upturned as a tree. 11. He kindles his wrath

against me and counts me among his enemies. 12. His troops charge upon me together; they cast up their embankments against me; they encamp round about my tent. 13. He hath alienated my brethren from me; those who have known me are wholly estranged from me. 14. My nearest friends have deserted me; my old acquaintance have forgotten me. 15. Even the members of my household and my maid-servants account me a stranger; I am a foreigner in their eyes. 16. To my servant I call, and he answers me not, though with my mouth I entreat him. 17. My breath is offensive to my wife—my entreaty, to those born of the same mother. 18. Even young children despise me; when I rise up they speak against me. 19. All my confidential friends have abhorred me; those I have loved best have turned against me. 20. My bones cleave to my skin and my flesh, and I have escaped with only the skin of teeth. 21. Have pity on me, have pity on me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me. 22. Why do ye pursue me as God and are not satisfied with my flesh? 23. O that my words might now be written! O that they were inscribed in the book! 24. With an iron style and with lead; were cut into the rock forever! 25. Yet I do know that my Redeemer lives, and that He, the last [or in the latter time] shall arise upon the earth; 26. And after this skin of mine is destroyed, even without my flesh, shall I see God; 27. Whom I for myself shall see and my own eyes and not another's shall behold. My inmost soul has pined away with longing [for this vision]. 28. Because ye say—How will we pursue him! And yet the root of the matter [intrinsic rectitude] is found in me; 29. Be ye therefore afraid for yourselves of the sword [of justice], for [such] wrath is a crime for the sword [to punish]—that ye may know there is a judgment.



CHAPTER XX.

Zophar replies.

1. Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said, 2. Therefore do my deep thoughts press me to reply: Because of this is my eager haste. 3. I must hear myself shamefully

rebuked ; therefore the spirit from my inward thought forces me to answer.

4. Hast thou known this from of old, from the planting of man upon the earth—5. That the triumphant shout of the wicked is short, and the joy of the great sinner only for a moment? 6. Though his excellency tower up to the heavens and his head even touch the clouds; 7. Yet corresponding to his exaltation, so shall he perish forever: those who have seen him will say, Where is he? 8. As a dream shall he fly away and they shall not find him; he shall be chased away as a vision of the night. 9. The eye that saw him shall not see him again, nor shall his place behold him any more. 10. His sons shall conciliate the poor, and his hands shall make restitution of his [ill-gotten] wealth. 11. His bones are full of his youthful vigor; yet it shall lie down with him in the dust [of the grave]. 12. Though evil be sweet in his mouth and he hide it under his tongue; 13. Though he nurse it tenderly and will not forsake it, but will hold it fast in the midst of his mouth; 14. Yet his food turns acrid in his bowels—the gall of asps within him. 15. The riches he has swallowed greedily, he shall vomit up; God will make him disgorge it from his belly. 16. The poison of asps shall he suck; the tongue of the adder shall be his death. 17. Never shall he see the water-courses [for irrigation], and the flowing streams of honey and butter. 18. The fruits of his labor shall he restore and not swallow down; as borrowed treasure, he shall not rejoice therein. 19. Because he has crushed and forsaken the poor, he has seized a house by robbery, but shall never build it up. 20. Because he has never known quiet in his bosom, he shall save none of his coveted treasures. 21. Nothing escaped his devouring greed; therefore his good shall not be enduring. 22. At the point of his full sufficiency, he is in straits: every hand of the wretched comes down upon him. 23. Let his belly be filled! God will pour out upon him the fierceness of his wrath and rain it upon him with his food. 24. When he would flee from the shaft of iron, the bow of brass shall smite him through. 25. He draws out the arrow and it comes forth from his body—the gleaming blade from his gall: terrors are upon him. 26. All darkness is stored up for his treasure; a fire not blown up [but spontaneous] shall consume him; it shall devour the last survivor in his tent. 27. Heaven shall reveal his iniquity; earth shall rise up against him. 28. The increase of his house shall go away as into captivity—even his gathered riches in the

day of his wrath. 29. This is the portion of the wicked man from God—his ordained inheritance from the Almighty.



CHAPTER XXI.

Job's reply.

1. Job answered and said; 2. Hear my words attentively, and let this be the consolation ye give me. 3. Bear with me and let me speak: after I have spoken, mock on.

4. As for me, is my complaint made to man? [Since it is not] why should not my spirit be troubled? 5. Look on me and be astonished; lay your hand upon your mouth! 6. When I remember all, I am amazed; trembling seizes my flesh.

7. Why do wicked men live, become old, and indeed, mighty in power? 8. Their children settle down with them in their presence—their offspring under their eye. 9. Their homes are safe from fear; no scourging rod of God falls on them. 10. Their cow breeds without fail and is delivered of her young safely. 11. They send forth their little ones as a flock and their children dance. 12. They take timbrel and harp, and are glad at the voice of the organ. 13. They fill out their days in good, and then in a moment they go down to Sheol. 14. And yet they have been saying to God, Depart from us, the knowledge of thy ways we have not desired. 15. Who is the Almighty that we should serve him, and what profit shall we gain though we pray never so earnestly? 16. Mark well; Their good [ye say] is not in their hand! But far from me be the counsel of the wicked! 17. *How* often is the candle of the wicked put out? *How* often does calamity come down upon them and God allot to them pangs in his wrath? 18. And they become stubble before the wind and chaff which the whirlwind snatches away? 19. Does God [as ye say] store up his sin for his children? Rather let him requite it upon the man himself that *he* may know it. 20. Let his own eyes see his calamity, and let the sinner himself drink of the wrath of the Almighty. 21. For what pleasure can he have in his house after him when the number of his months is cut off? 22. Is it to God that one would impart knowledge?—for *He* judges beings most exalted.

23. One man dies in the fullness of his perfection, altogether peaceful and prosperous. 24. His loins are full of fat; the marrow of his bones is moist. 25. Another dies of a bitter heart, and has never tasted good. 26. Together they lie down in the dust, and the worms cover them [alike].

27. Lo, I understand your thoughts and the artful reasonings which ye cruelly apply against me. 28. For ye say—Where is the house of the prince, and where is the tent in which the wicked dwell? 29. Have ye not asked the way-faring men, and do ye not recognize the signs of their judgment? 30. That the wicked is reserved to a day of calamity—carried over to a day of wrath? 31. *Who* sets his way before his face, and *who* requites to him what he hath done? 32. And this man is borne to his grave [with honor], and men watch over his tomb. 33. The clods of the valley are sweet to him; after him all men draw and before him too, without number. 34. How vain therefore are the comforts ye would give me! and in your answers [when sifted] nothing remains but false views of God.



CHAPTER XXII.

Last speech of Eliphaz.

1. Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said, 2. Can a man bring profit to God? For it is himself the wise man profits. 3. Is it a pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? Is it gain to him that thou makest thy life perfect? 4. Is it because of thy piety that he reproves thee and enters into judgment with thee? 5. Is not thy iniquity great, and there is no end to thy sins? 6. For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for no consideration, and the garment of the naked thou hast torn away; 7. Thou hast not given water to the weary and hast withheld bread from the famishing; 8. The man of strong arm held the land, and men most respected dwelt in it. 9. Widows thou hast cast out empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been crushed. 10. For these reasons have snares beset thee on every side and sudden fear hath filled thee with terror; 11. Or darkness through which thou couldst see nothing, and water-floods have covered thee.

12. Is not God in the height of heaven? Look away to the lofty stars, for they are very high. 13. Yet thou hast been saying [to thyself]—How should God know? can he judge through the thick cloud? 14. Dense clouds are a covering about him, and he will not see; he walks to and fro upon the high vault of heaven.

15. Wilt thou pursue the old way which those wicked men had trodden, 16. Who were seized hold of before their time; a mighty flood was poured forth upon their foundation; 17. Who were saying to God—Depart from us, and what can the Almighty do for them? 18. Yet he [this same God] had filled their houses with good! Far from me be the counsel of the wicked! 19. The righteous shall see it and rejoice; the innocent retort upon them their scorn. 20. Most assuredly our adversaries [say they] are cut off, and all that remains of them, fire has devoured.

21. Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace; by such a course shall good come unto thee. 22. I pray thee take law from his mouth and put his word in thy heart. 23. If thou wilt return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up; if thou wilt put iniquity far from thy tents; 24. If thou wilt cast gold to the ground—the gold of Ophir to the stones of the brook, 25. Then shall the Almighty become thy gold, and silver toilfully earned, for thee; 26. For then shalt thou delight thyself in the Almighty and shalt lift up thy face trustfully unto God. 27. Thou shalt make supplication unto him, and he will hear thee, and thou shalt perform thy vows. 28. Thou shalt frame a plan and it shall stand, and light shall break forth upon thy ways. 29. When thy ways are depressed, then thou shalt say, Uplifting [comes soon]; and God will save men of humble aspect. 30. He will deliver even the guilty [the *not* innocent]; he shall be delivered by the pureness of thy hands.



CHAPTER XXIII.

Job's reply to the last speech of Eliphaz.

1. Job answered and said, 2. Even to-day is my complaint deemed unreasonable; but the stroke I feel is heavier than my groans. 3. Oh that I knew and might find him;

that I might come even to his seat; 4. That I might order my cause before him and fill my mouth with arguments; 5. That I might know with what words he would answer me and might understand what he would say to me! 6. Would he contend with me in his great strength? No; but he would surely set his thought upon me. 7. There the upright might reason with him, and I should be delivered forever from my [human] judge. 8. Lo, I go forward [to the east]—but he is not there; backward, but I discern him not; 9. To the left where he works gloriously—but I behold him not: he hides himself on the right hand, and I can not see him. 10. But still he knows his way with me: when he has tried me I shall come forth as gold. 11. My foot has held fast upon his steps; his way have I kept and not declined from it. 12. From the precepts of his lips I swerve not; high above my own will have I treasured and regarded the words of his mouth. 13. His thought is one, and who can turn him? His soul desires, and then he does it. 14. For he will accomplish what is ordained for me, and many things like these are in his plan. 15. Therefore am I troubled before him; I labor to understand these things, and I am afraid of him. God hath made my heart soft; the Almighty hath troubled me. 16. For I am not broken before the face of mere [external] darkness, nor because he hath spread [such] darkness before my face.



CHAPTER XXIV.

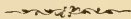
Job concludes his speech.

1. Since, on the part of the Almighty, his times [of judgment] are not hidden, why do not those who know him see his days [of retribution]?

2. They remove landmarks; they seize upon flocks of cattle, and then feed them [as their own]. 3. The ass of the fatherless they lead away, and take the widow's ox in pledge. 4. They turn the needy out of their way; all the poor of the land hide themselves.

5. Behold, wild asses are they in the wilderness; they go forth for their work in the early morning, seeking something to pluck off; the desert is bread to them for the children. 6.

In the fields they pluck each his fodder; they glean the wicked man's vintage. 7. Naked they spend the night with no clothing, and have no covering in the cold. 8. They are wet with the mountain showers, and for want of shelter, nestle close under the rocks. 9. Their oppressors tear the orphan babe from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor. 10. These walk about naked with no clothing; they gather sheaves, yet are hungry. 11. Within house-walls they make oil; they tread wine-presses, yet suffer thirst. 12. Men of the city groan; the soul of the wounded cries aloud, but God seems not to heed the crime. 13. These men are of those who rebel against daylight; they know not its ways; they dwell not in its paths. 14. The murderer will rise at the dawn and will slay the poor and the needy; and in the night, will be as the thief. 15. The adulterer's eye watches for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: he disguises his face. 16. He digs in the dark through house-walls: by day they hide themselves; they know not the light. 17. For universally the morning is to them as the shadow of death, for he knows well the terrors of the shadow of death. 18. As a light skiff is he on the face of the waters; accursed is their portion in the earth; he turns not to the way of vineyards. 19. Drought and heat bear away the snow-waters; Sheol, those who have sinned. 20. The mother that bare shall forget him; the worms feed sweetly upon him; he shall be remembered no more: the wicked man is broken down utterly as the tree. 21. He devours the barren woman who has never borne; he blesses not the widow. 22. In his power he takes away the mighty; he rises up and one is not sure of his life. 23. He may grant to one to be in safety, and then he may have rest; yet are his eyes upon their way. 24. They rise high for a little time, and then they are not: they are brought low; like all the world they are gathered in and are cut off like the top-ears of corn. 25. If this be not so, who will prove me a liar and put my words to nought?



CHAPTER XXV.

Last speech of Bildad.

1. Bildad the Shuhite answered and said, 2. Dominion and fear are his of right; he maketh peace in his high heavens.

3. Is there any numbering of his hosts? and on whom doth not his light arise? 4. How then shall man be just with God? and how shall one born of woman be pure? 5. Look away to the moon: it gives no light;—to the stars, and they are not pure in his eyes! 6. How much less then, man, a reptile, and the son of man, a worm!



CHAPTER XXVI.

Job begins his final reply.

1. Job answered and said, 2. How hast thou helped the helpless and saved the arm of the powerless! 3. How hast thou given counsel to men of no wisdom, and made them understand knowledge abundantly! 4. With whose aid hast thou set forth [such] words, and whose inspiration has gone forth from thee?

5. The shades of the dead tremble from beneath the waters and their inhabitants. 6. Naked is Sheol before him, and there is no covering to the pit of destruction. 7. He stretches out the north over empty space, and hangs the earth upon nothing. 8. He binds the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent beneath them. 9. He shuts up the face of his throne, and spreads his thick cloud over it. 10. He described a circle on the face of the waters, even to the border line between light and darkness. 11. The pillars of heaven tremble and are astounded at his rebuke. 12. By his power he stills the sea, and in his wisdom smites down the proud. 13. By his creative spirit he adorned the heavens, and his hand framed the constellation—the flying serpent. 14. Lo, these are only the outlying borders of his works! What a whisper of a word do we hear of him! The thunder of his power, who can comprehend?

CHAPTER XXVII.

Job continues his speech.

1. Job resumed his illustrative discourse and said: 2. As God lives who has taken away my judgment, and the Almighty who has made my soul bitter; 3. Surely, so long as my breath is in me and the inbreathed Spirit of God is in my nostrils; 4. My lips shall never speak falsely nor shall my tongue utter deceit. 5. Be it an abomination to me that I should justify you while I live; I will not disown my integrity. 6. I have held fast to my integrity and I will not relax my hold. My heart shall reproach none of my days.

7. Let my enemy be as the wicked, and whoever may rise against me, as the unrighteous. 8. For what is the hope of the daring sinner, though he hath torn away [other's wealth] when God shall tear away his soul! 9. When trouble shall come upon him, will God hear his cry? 10. Will he on his part delight himself in the Almighty, and call upon God at all times?

11. I will teach you concerning the hand of God; the counsels of the Almighty I will not conceal. 12. Behold, ye have all seen it; why then is this that ye speak such vanities? 13. This is the wicked man's portion from God, and the heritage of oppressors which they shall receive from the Almighty. 14. If his children are multiplied, it is for the sword, and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread. 15. By the pestilence shall his survivors come to their early graves, and his widows shall not bewail their dead. 16. If he heap up silver as dirt, and prepare clothing as the clay; 17. He may prepare, but the righteous shall wear it and the innocent shall divide his silver among themselves. 18. He builds his house as the moth does, and as a booth which the vineyard-keeper fits up. 19. The rich man lies down in death, but is not gathered to the fathers; he opens his eyes—and he is *not*! 20. Terrors overtake him like the water-floods; in a night the whirlwind snatches him away. 21. An east wind bears him away and he is gone; it hurls him, as the tempest, out of his place. 22. God will cast forth his thunderbolts upon him and spare not, while the sinner would fain flee from his hand. 23. Men clap their hands at him and hiss him from his place.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

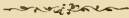
Job continues.

1. For there is a mine for the silver and a place for the gold which men refine. 2. Iron is taken out of the ground, and copper is molten from stone-ore. 3. He [the miner] finds the end of darkness; he pushes his search to its uttermost limit for the stone-ore of darkness and death-shade. 4. He sinks a shaft far from where man sojourns, down paths forgotten of the foot. They hang pendulous, wandering far from man's abode. 5. As to the earth, bread-corn comes forth from it; but the realms underneath it are upturned as with fire. 6. Her stones are the place of sapphires; gold-dust is there. 7. The path—no bird of prey has known it; no vulture's eye hath seen it. 8. No proudly moving beasts have trodden it, nor has the lion passed over it. 9. The miner smites the flinty rock, and turns up mountains by their roots. 10. He cuts water-courses in the rocks; his eye sees all precious things. 11. He binds the water-streams from dripping; things deeply hidden he brings forth to light.

12. But *wisdom*, whence shall it be found; and where is the place of understanding? 13. Man knows not the price of it, nor is it found in the land of the living. 14. The Deep saith—It is not in me; the Sea saith—Not with me. 15. Fine gold shall not be given for it, nor shall silver be weighed out as its price. 16. It shall not be put in the balance against the gold of Ophir, the precious onyx or the sapphire. 17. Gold and crystal shall not measure its value, nor shall vessels of most fine gold be its exchange. 18. Coral and pearls are not to be thought of; the price of wisdom is above the red coral. 19. The topaz of Ethiopia can not equal it, nor shall it be weighed against the most pure gold.

20. Whence then shall wisdom come, and where is the place of understanding? 21. It is hidden from the eyes of all the living and covered from the fowls of the heaven. 22. Destruction and death have said, We have heard a rumor of it with our ears. 23. God understands the way to it and he knows its place: 24. For his eye pierces to the very ends of the earth, and sweeps whatever is under the whole heaven—25. To fix the weight for the winds, and to assign


the waters by measure. 26. When he established the law for the rain and the path for the thunder-flash: 27. Then he saw and revealed it; he prepared it and also searched it out. 28. And unto man he said: Lo, the fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.



CHAPTER XXIX.

Job continues.

1. Again Job resumed his discourse and said; 2. O that I were as in former months, as in the days when God preserved me; 3. When his lamp shone down upon my head, and in his light I walked through darkness; 4. As I was in my autumn days, when the favor of God rested on my tabernacle; 5. While the Almighty was yet with me and my children were round about me; 6. When my steps were bathed in milk, and the rock poured out for me streams of oil. 7. When I went forth to the city-gate and prepared my seat [the judge's bench] in the public square; 8. Then young men saw me and modestly retired: old men arose and stood. 9. Princes refrained from speaking and put the hand to their mouth. 10. The voice of nobles was not heard; their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. 11. For the ear heard and then blessed me; the eye saw and then witnessed to my honor, 12. Because I delivered the poor who cried in distress, the fatherless also and him who had no helper. 13. The blessing of the perishing came upon me; I made the widow's heart sing for joy. 14. I put on righteousness as my clothing, and then righteousness put on me; as a royal robe and diadem were my judicial decisions. 15. I became eyes to the blind; feet was I to the lame. 16. I was a father to the poor, and the cause I had not known I searched out thoroughly. 17. I brake in the jaws of the extortioner, and plucked forth his prey from his teeth. 18. Then I said, I shall die in my nest; I shall multiply days as the sand. 19. My root lay open to the waters; the dew lay all night on my branch. 20. My glory was fresh upon me and my bow in my hand was renewed in strength. 21. To me men listened; they waited in silence for my counsel. 22. After my words they spake not again; my words dripped as the dew upon them. 23. They waited for me as men wait



for the rain; they opened wide their mouth for the latter rain. 24. I smiled on them;—they could not believe it; my lighted countenance they never caused to fall. 25. I chose for them their way; I sat a chieftain, and dwelt as a king with his hosts—as one who comforts mourners.



CHAPTER XXX.

Job continues.

1. But now men younger than I treat me scornfully, whose fathers I should have disdained to set with my shepherd-dogs. 2. Moreover, of what avail to me could be their strength of hand, since their vital forces have already perished? 3. Famished with want and hunger, they are gnawing down the desert—the darkness of desolate wastes: 4. Who pluck the salt plants among the bushes, and the roots of the bitter broom are their bread. 5. They are driven forth from among men who shouted after them as after the thief; 6. To dwell in horrid valleys, in holes under ground and in the rocks; 7. Among the bushes they brayed [like asses]; they lie sprawled out under the nettles; 8. Sons of fools; yea, sons of basest men—they were driven forth from the earth. 9. But now of such men I have become a song of derision; I am to them for a by-word. 10. They abhor me, they stand aloof from me, and do not forbear to spit in my presence. 11. Because he [God] hath loosed his cord [of restraint] and afflicted me, they also have broken loose all their restraint before me. 12. On the right hand there rises a young brood; they trip my feet and raise up against me their ways of approach for my destruction. 13. They mar my path; they help on my utter fall. I have no helper against them. 14. They rush upon me as waters through a wide breach; they roll themselves upon me wave after wave for my destruction. 15. Terrors are turned upon me; they put my dignity to flight as the wind; as a cloud does my salvation pass away. 16. And now my soul is poured out within me; days of affliction have seized upon me. 17. By night my bones in me are pierced; my gnawing pains will not rest. 18. Through their great violence my skin is disfigured; it girds me close about like the mouth of my outer garment. 19. He hath cast me into the mire, and I am

made to be like dust and ashes. 20. I cry unto thee and thou wilt not answer me, though I stood and thou didst seem to see me. 21. Thou hast turned thyself to a cruel one against me; with the strength of thy hand thou dost persecute me. 22. Thou liftest me up to the wind and dost bear me away on its blast and break me to pieces in the tempest's crash. 23. For I know that by death thou wilt turn me back [to dust]—to the house appointed for all the living. 24. Surely there is no prayer [to purpose] when God puts forth the hand, nor is any cry for help possible for them when He destroys. 25. *If* I have not wept for those whose lot was hard, and *if* my soul has not been grieved for the poor! 26. But yet I have waited for good, and then there came evil; I have waited for light, and there came darkness. 27. My bowels boiled with heat and had no rest; days of affliction met me in the face. 28. I walked about blackened, yet not with sun-heat; I have stood up and cried aloud in the congregation. 29. I have been a brother to jackals, a companion to the daughters of the ostrich. 30. My skin comes off from me blackened, and my bones are hot with fever-heat. 31. My harp is only for mourning; my organ for the voice of weeping.



CHAPTER XXXI.

The close of Job's last reply.

1. I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? 2. What is the allotment of God from above, and what the inheritance of the Almighty from on high? 3. Is it not destruction to the wicked and unwonted calamity to the workers of iniquity? 4. Will not he see my ways and number all my steps? 5. If I have walked in falsehood and my foot has hastened to deceit, 6. He will weigh me in the scales of justice and he will know my integrity. 7. If my steps have deflected from the right way and my heart has gone after my eyes, and a blot has cleaved to my hand; 8. Then let me sow and another eat, and let my crops be rooted up. 9. If my heart has been enticed toward woman; if I have lain in wait at the door of my friend; 10. Let my wife grind for another, and let others bow down upon her. 11. For

this is a crime of wicked intent—a sin for the Judge [to punish]. 12. For this is a fire that will consume even to destruction, and will root out all my increase.

13. If I disregarded the rights of my man-servant or of my maid-servant in their litigation with me; 14. What should I do when God should arise? and when He should look into the case, what should I answer him? 15. Did not He who formed me in the womb form him also? Did not one God give us both our being in the womb? 16. If I have withheld the poor from what they desired and have consumed with grief the eyes of the widow; 17. If I have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless have not eaten of it also; 18. For from my youth he grew up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb; 19. If I have seen any one perish for want of clothing and there was no covering for the poor; 20. If his loins have not blessed me and he were not made warm by the fleece of my sheep; 21. If I have lifted my hand against the fatherless when I saw my helper in the gate; 22. Let my shoulder fall from its shoulder-blade and my arm be broken from the bone. 23. For destruction from God is a terror to me and before his majesty I could not [stand].

24. If I have made gold my hope and have said to fine gold, Thou art my trust; 25. If I have rejoiced that my wealth was great and that my hand had found much; 26. If I beheld the sun when it shone forth and the moon walking in brightness,—27. And then my heart has been secretly enticed and my hand has gently touched my mouth; 28. This also were a sin for my judge [to punish], for I should have denied the God above.

29. If I have rejoiced in the destruction of him who hated me or was elated with joy when evil befell him;—30. But I did not suffer my mouth to sin by asking for a curse upon his soul: 31. If the men in charge of my tent do not say—Who can produce a man not satisfied to the full with his flesh-meat? 32. The stranger has not lodged without; I opened my doors to the traveler: 33. If I have covered my transgression as Adam did to hide my sin in my bosom—34. Then let me dread the great assembly, and let the contempt of whole tribes confound me so that I should be dumb and not go forth from my door.

35. O that there were some one to hear me! Lo, my mark! Let the Almighty answer me and my legal opponent put his charge in writing! 36. Then if I would not bear

it on my shoulder and bind it on my head as a crown ! 37. I would set before him all my steps ; I would come near to him like a prince.

38. If my land cry out against me and all its furrows weep ; 39. If I have eaten the products of it without money and have made its tenants breathe out their life ;—40. Then let thistles grow from it instead of wheat and foul weeds instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.



CHAPTER XXXII.

*Elihu appears.**

1. So these three men ceased to answer Job because he was right in his own eyes. 2. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu, son of Barachel the Buzite, of the tribe of Ram ; against Job was his wrath kindled because his soul justified itself rather than God. 3. Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled because they had found no answer and yet had condemned Job.

4. Now in respect to words Elihu had waited for Job [and his friends] because they were older than he. 5. When Elihu saw there was no answer in the mouths of the three friends, his wrath was kindled. 6. Elihu, son of Barachel the Buzite, took up the case and said—I am young, and ye are very old ; therefore I advanced timidly and feared to show you my opinion. 7. I said, Days should speak and the multitude of years should teach wisdom. 8. But verily there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding. 9. Not all great men are wise, nor do all the aged understand judgment. 10. Therefore I said, Hear ye me ; let even me set forth my opinion. 11. Lo, I have waited for your words ; I gave ear to your arguments until ye had searched out what to say. 12. Unto you I gave ear diligently, and behold, no one convicted Job ; none of you answered his words : 13. Lest ye say, We have found out wisdom : God—not man—must put him down.

14. Now he has not arranged his words against me, and I shall not reply to him with your speeches. 15. They were amazed ; they answered not again ; words were far away from them. 16. When I had waited—for they spake not,

but stood and answered not again ; 17. [I said] I also for my part will answer ; even I will show my opinion. 18. For I am full of words ; the spirit within me presses me sore. 19. Lo, my belly is as wine and has no vent ; it will burst as new bottles. 20. Let me speak, and it will give me relief ; let me open my lips and answer. 21. Let me not accept the person of man ; I will not flatter any man. 22. For I know not [how] to flatter ; and [if I should] my Maker would soon take me off.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

Elihu continues.

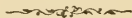
1. Wherefore, O Job, I pray thee, hear my words and give ear to all I may say. 2. Behold now, I have opened my mouth ; my tongue has spoken in my mouth. 3. My words are the uprightness of my heart ; my lips shall speak forth knowledge in purity.

4. The Spirit of God has made me ; the breath of the Almighty gives me life. 5. Answer me if thou art able ; set thyself before me ; take thy stand. 6. Lo, I am like thyself as to God ; I too am formed of clay. 7. See, the fear of me will not terrify thee ; my dignity shall not be heavy upon thee. 8. Surely thou hast said in mine ears and I have heard the voice of thy words—9. I am pure without transgression ; I am cleansed ; there is no iniquity in me. 10. Lo, He will find occasions of antagonism against me ; He will account me his enemy. 11. He puts my feet in the stocks ; he watches all my paths.

12. Lo, in this thou art not right. I will answer thee, for God is greater than man. 13. Wherefore dost thou contend with him ? For he will answer as to none of his matters. 14. For God will speak once, and a second time if one does not notice it. 15. In dreams and night-visions when deep sleep falls on men, in slumbers upon the bed : 16. Then he opens the ear of men and seals instruction to them, 17. To divert man from misdeeds, and he will hide pride from ambitious man. 18. He will hold back his soul from the pit and his life from passing away under the fatal dart. 19. He is chastened with suffering upon his bed and with racking pain of his bones continually ; 20. So that his appetite

loathes bread, and his soul all desirable food. 21. His flesh is consumed from view; his bones—not seen before—are laid bare. 22. Then his soul draws near to the pit and his life to the destroyer. 23. If there be then a messenger for him, an interpreter, one of a thousand, to show to man his right way; 24. Then he will be gracious to him and will say—“Redeem him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.” 25. Then his flesh shall be more fresh than a child’s; he shall be borne back to the days of his youth. 26. He shall make supplication to God, and He will accept him with favor: he will look upon the face [of God] with joy, and He will render to man his righteousness. 27. He shall chant it before men and shall say—I had sinned and perverted the right, and it was never fully requited against me. 28. He hath redeemed my soul from going down to the pit; my life shall behold the light. 29. Lo, all these things does God accomplish, even thrice told, with man; 30. To bring back his soul from the pit, to renew the light of his life.

31. Attend, O Job; listen to me; be silent and I will speak. 32. If thou hast words to say in reply, speak; for I shall delight to justify thee. 33. But if thou hast nothing to reply, hear me; be silent, and I will teach thee wisdom.



CHAPTER XXXIV.

Elihu continues.

1. Then Elihu resumed and said: 2. Hear my words, ye wise men, and ye who have knowledge, give ear to me: 3. For the ear tries words, and the mouth tastes for eating. 4. Let us search out for ourselves what is right; let us know between us what is good. 5. For Job has said, “I am righteous, and God has taken away my rights. 6. Shall I speak falsely against my own right? My arrow-wound is incurable, for no sin of mine.”

7. What manly soul is like Job who drinks in scoffing as water, 8. Who goes in company with evil-doers and walks with wicked men? 9. For he has said—a man will find no profit from taking his delight in God. 10. Therefore, ye men

of understanding, hearken to me. God turns away from wickedness with abhorrence,—the Almighty, from all injustice! 11. For the very work of man God will render to him, and will bring upon him according to his own way. 12. Most assuredly God will do nothing wicked; the Almighty will never pervert justice. 13. Who has put him in charge of the earth, and who has set him over the whole inhabited world? 14. If he set his heart on man, if he recall to himself man's spirit and breath; 15. All flesh would expire together and mortal man return unto dust. 16. If there be understanding, hear this; give ear to the voice of my words. 17. Shall one who hates the right have supreme dominion? Wilt thou condemn the Just and Mighty One? 18. Shall one say to a king—O thou bad! and to nobles, O wicked one! 19. To one who accepts not the person of princes and knows not the rich in the presence of the poor, because they all are the work of his hands? 20. In a moment they die; at midnight they are smitten and pass away; even the mighty are taken away by no [visible] hand. 21. For his eyes are on the ways of man and he sees all his steps. 22. There is no darkness, no death-shade, where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves. 23. For he will not set his thought again and again upon man that he may come before God in the judgment. 24. But he crushes the mighty with no long antecedent searching, and sets up other men in their stead. 25. Inasmuch as he knows their deeds and overturns them in a night and they are crushed to pieces. 26. They being wicked, he smites them in the presence of beholders; 27. Because they turned back from following him and would understand none of his ways; 28. So that they bring up the cry of the poor before him, and he will hear the outcry of the afflicted. 29. When He gives rest, who shall condemn as guilty? and when he hides his face, who shall behold him? and alike as to a nation or an individual man. 30. So that no bad man shall reign, nor the people be ensnared. 31. For should not one say unto God—I have borne [chastisement]; I will be perverse no more? 32. What I can not see, teach thou me; if I have done evil, I will not again. 33. Shall it be at thy will that God shall requite, so that thou mayest refuse, or thou choose, and not He? What thou knowest, speak. 34. Let men of understandings speak to me, and let the wise man hear me. 35. Job speaks without knowledge, and his words are not in wisdom. 36. O that Job might be tried thoroughly on account of his answers in

sympathy with wicked men! 37. For he adds rebellion to his sins of error; he claps his hands among us and multiplies his words against God.



CHAPTER XXXV.

Elihu continues.

1. Elihu resumed and said: 2. Dost thou think this to be right? Thou hast said—My righteousness is more than God's. 3. For thou saidst, What will it profit thee, and what shall I gain more than by my sin? 4. With words I will answer thee and thy friends with thee.

5. Look up to the heavens and see; behold the clouds; they are higher than thou. 6. If thou hast sinned what dost thou effect as to him? If thy transgressions are many, what dost thou to him? 7. If thou art righteous, what dost thou give to him? or what does he receive from thy hand? 8. Thy wickedness is toward a man such as thou art, and thy righteousness toward a son of man. 9. Because of the multitude of oppressions, they cry; because of the arm of the mighty they cry for help; 10. Yet he does not say, Where is God my Maker who gives songs in the night? 11. Who teaches us more than he does the beasts of the earth, and makes us wiser than the fowls of the heavens. 12. There they cry, but He does not answer, because of the pride of the wicked. 13. Surely God will not hear vain [insincere] prayer; the Almighty will not regard it. 14. How much less when thou sayest thou wilt not regard him! The cause is before Him [as the Infinite Judge]; wait thou upon him. 15. But now because He does not visit with anger and does not closely scrutinize transgression; 16. Therefore Job opens his mouth for vanity, and multiplies words without knowledge.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Elihu continues.

1. Elihu still continued and said; 2. Wait for me yet a little and I will show thee, for there are yet more words for God. 3. I will bring my knowledge from far, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker. 4. For truly my words are not false; one perfect in knowledge is with thee.

5. Lo, God is mighty, yet will he never oppress; mighty is He in strength of understanding. 6. He blesses not the life of the wicked; but he will award the right of the poor. 7. He withdraws not his eyes from the righteous; with kings on the throne are they; He makes them sit there forever, and they are exalted in honor. 8. But if, bound in chains, they are caught in the tight bands of affliction, 9. Then He sets before them their deeds and their transgressions, because they have dealt proudly. 10. He opens their ear to the instruction [he would give], and says they must turn back from iniquity. 11. If they will hear and will serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasure. 12. But if they will not hear, they pass away by the dart and die without knowledge. 13. Men of vile heart heap up wrath [against themselves]; they will not cry [to God] when He binds them [in affliction]. 14. Their soul shall die in youth and their life with prostitutes.

15. He will deliver the poor in his affliction; he will open their ear in the distress [brought on them]. 16. And even thee, O Job, would he allure from the jaws of the strait into a broad place, having no straits underneath [or beyond] it; and the food on thy table should be full of fatness. 17. Thou hast filled thy heart with the judgments [opinions] of wicked men; the judgments and justice [of God] shall take hold of thee. 18. Because there is heat [of resentment], beware lest it excite thee against the chastising stroke; for then, [in that case] a great ransom can not deliver thee. 19. Will he esteem thy riches—not of small amount—and all the resources of wealth? 20. Pant not for the night [of death] for the nations to go down to the under-world. 21. Take heed; turn not toward iniquity, for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.

22. Behold, God is exalted in power; who is a teacher like Him? 23. Who hath enjoined upon him the way he shall

take, or who can say—Thou hast done wrong? 24. Remember that thou magnify his work which men [fitly] celebrate in song. 25. All men have seen it; man may behold it from afar. 26. Lo, God is high and we shall not know him; the number of his years there is no searching out. 27. For he draws up the water-drops [by evaporation]; they pour forth the rain for his vapor; 28. Which the clouds shed forth and distill upon man abundantly. 29. Can one understand the bursting of the thunder-cloud—the noise of his tent? 30. Behold, he spreads his light round about himself; he covers himself with the waters of the ocean depths. 31. For by these he judges the nations; he gives food in abundance. 32. The palms of his hands he covers with the lightning's blaze and gives it his commission against the enemy. 33. His thunder speaks of him—to the herds of cattle even—of Him who is on high.



CHAPTER XXXVII.

Close of Elihu's speech.

1. My heart also trembles at this and would start from its place: 2. Listen attentively to the roar of his voice—the sound which goes forth from his mouth. 3. Under the whole heaven he shapes its course, and the light of it to the ends of the earth. 4. After it [the lightning], a voice roars; he thunders with the voice of his majesty: he will not detain them [the lightnings] when his voice of thunder is heard. 5. God thunders marvelously with his voice, doing great things, and we can not know them. 6. For he commands the snow—Be thou upon the earth; also the gentle rain and the great rain of his strength. 7. He seals up [from labor] the hand of every man, that all men of his workmanship may know him. 8. Then the beast goes into his den and dwells in his place of rest. 9. From the south comes the whirlwind, and from the north, the cold. 10. By the breath of God he gives ice and the breadth of the waters is compressed. 11. Also with moisture he loads the thick clouds; he sends abroad his lightning-cloud. 12. He turns them about by his guiding will that they may accomplish all that he commands them

upon the face of the inhabited world. 13. He causes it to find and execute its work, whether for a rod for his land, or for mercy. 14. Hear this, O Job; stand and consider the wonderful works of God! 15. Didst thou know it at the time when God set his thought upon these things, and made the lightnings of his cloud shine forth? 16. Didst thou know as to the balancings of the clouds—the wonderful works of Him who is perfect in knowledge? 17. How thy garments are warm when he makes the earth quiet under his south wind? 18. Didst thou with him construct the firmament, solid as a molten mirror? 19. Teach us what we shall say to him, for we can not put it in order on account of our darkness. 20. Shall it be said to him—I would speak [to thee]? Shall a man speak [to God] that he may be swallowed up? 21. Even now men can not gaze on the bright sun in the skies when the wind has passed over and cleared them. 22. From the north breaks forth the clear golden sky; with God is terrible majesty. 23. The Almighty! we have not found him out; exalted is he in power and in judgment and in abundant righteousness. He will answer to no charges. 24. Therefore have men feared him; he will look [propitiously] on none of the wise of heart.



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Jehovah speaks to Job.

1. Then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind and said—2. Who is this that darkens counsel with words and no knowledge? 3. Gird now thy loins like a mighty man, and I will ask thee, and teach thou me. 4. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Inform me if thou hast known intelligently. 5. Who laid the measures of it—for thou wilt know; or who stretched the builder's line upon it? 6. Upon what were its massive foundations sunken, or who laid its corner-stone, 7. When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? 8. And then he hedged in the sea with double doors when in its breaking forth, it issued as from a womb: 9. When I made the cloud its garment, and thick clouds its swaddling-

bands; 10. And then I assigned my bounds to it, and set bars and doors; 11. And said—So far thou mayest come, but no farther, and here let there be a stand in the pride of thy waves.

12. Since thy days hast thou commanded the morning and made the day-dawn know its place, 13. That it might grasp the corners of the earth and the wicked be shaken out of it through fear? 14. Then the earth is changed [in appearance] as clay under the signet-ring; things stand forth in their beauty as a garment. 15. Their own light is withholden from the wicked, and their high arm of power is broken.

16. Hast thou been down to the springs of the sea and traversed the unexplored bottom of the deep? 17. Have the gates of Death been opened to thee, and hast thou seen the gates of the Shadow of Death? 18. Has thy knowledge reached even to the breadth of the earth? Declare if thou hast known it all. 19. Where is the way to the dwelling-place of light; and darkness—where is *its* home? 20. For thou wilt take it to its bounds and thou wilt command the paths to its house! 21. Surely thou hast known, for thou wast then already born, and the number of thy days is great! 22. Hast thou been to the treasure-houses of snow and seen the treasure-houses of hail, 23. Which I have held in reserve for the time of trouble—for the day of battle and war? 24. Where is the way to the point whence light is apportioned and the east wind scattered over the earth? 25. Who has cut the water-courses for the great rain and the way for the thunder's flash? 26. To make rain fall on lands where there is no man and on the desert in which no man dwells; 27. To satisfy soils most sterile and barren and to start fresh herbage into growth.

28. Has the rain a father? or who has begotten the drops of dew? 29. Out of whose womb came forth the ice? and the hoar-frost of heaven—who hath gendered it? 30. The waters are hidden as in stone and the face of the deep coheres.

31. Dost thou bind the bands of the Pleiades, or unbind the girdle of Orion? 32. Dost thou bring forward the stars of the Zodiac each in his time? and the Great Bear with his sons, dost thou lead on? 33. Dost thou even understand the ordinances of the heavens? Dost thou appoint the dominion of each one in the earth? 34. Dost thou lift up thy voice of command to the clouds, and abundance of waters

shall cover thee? 35. Dost thou send forth the lightnings that they shall go and shall say to thee, Here we are?

36. Who has put wisdom within [man], or who has given intelligence to the mind? 37. Who shall number the clouds in wisdom, and who shall turn up to empty the bottles of heaven, 38. When the dust has thickened to a solid mass and the clods adhere together?

39. Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion, or fill the appetite of the young lions, 40. While the latter lie in their dens and the former lurk in concealment for their prey? 41. Who provideth for the raven his food? When his young cry unto God, they wander for lack of food.



CHAPTER XXXIX.

The Address of the Lord continued.

1. Dost thou know the time when the goats of the rock bring forth? Dost thou watch over the bringing forth of the hinds? 2. Dost thou determine the months they fulfill and know the time of their giving birth? 3. They bow themselves: they are delivered of their young; they soon dismiss their pains. 4. Their young mature early; they grow up in the open country; they go forth and return not to them.

5. Who hath sent forth the wild ass free? Who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? 6. Whose house I have made the wilderness and the sterile regions his dwelling-place. 7. He scorns the noises of the city; he will not hear [patiently] the cries of the driver. 8. The range of the mountains is his pasture-ground; he searches after all green herbs.

9. Will the wild ox be willing to serve thee? Will he spend the night at thy crib? 10. Wilt thou bind the wild ox with his bands in the furrow? Will he harrow the valleys after thee? 11. Wilt thou trust him because his strength is great? Wilt thou leave to him thy labors? 12. Wilt thou believe him that he will bring home thy seed and gather it to thy threshing-floor?

13. The wing of the ostrich waves proudly—but are his wings and pinions pious [like the affectionate stork]? 14.

[Nay] *for* she leaves her eggs on the earth and lets them be warmed on the sand; 15. And forgets that some foot may press on them or beast of the field crush them. 16. She is hard of heart toward her young as if not her own. That her birth-labor should be for nought, she has no fear: 17. For God has made her forget wisdom, nor has he imparted to her [the usual] understanding. 18. What time she strikes out her wings on high, she laughs at the horse and his rider.

19. Hast thou given to the war-horse his strength? Dost thou clothe his neck with terror? 20. Wilt thou make him afraid as the grasshopper? The glory of his snorting is terrible. 21. He paws in the valley and rejoices in his might; he moves on [proudly] to the shock of arms. 22. He mocks at fear and is never daunted, nor turns he back from the face of the sword, 23. Nor when the arrow rattles upon him, or the glittering spear and javalin. 24. Restless and leaping he swallows the ground and will not believe it the voice of the trumpet. 25. Oft as the war-trump sounds, he calls out Aha! He snuffs the battle from far—the thunder of the captains and the shouting.

26. Is it of thy wisdom that the hawk takes his flight and spreads his wings for the south? 27. Is it at thy command that the eagle soars aloft and makes his nest on high? 28. That he makes the lofty rock his home and lodging-place, even the crags of the rock and the stronghold? 29. Thence he descries his food; his eye will pierce afar. 30. His young gorge themselves with blood; where the slain lie, there is he.



CHAPTER XL.

The Lord resumes his address to Job.

1. Again the Lord answered Job and said, 2. Shall a reprover really contend with the Almighty? He who censures God, let him answer for it!

3. Then Job answered the Lord and said, 4. Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I put my hand upon my mouth. 5. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer again; twice, but I will add no more.

6. Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and

said—7. Gird now thy loins as a mighty man : I will demand of thee, and inform thou me.

8. Wilt thou indeed annul my right [to reign]? Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest justify thyself? 9. Is thine arm like God's? Canst thou thunder with a voice like his? 10. Put on now thy majesty and grandeur; array thyself in glory and beauty; 11. Cast abroad the outpourings of thy wrath; look down on every proud one and bring him low! 12. Look down on every proud one and make him bow, and tread down the wicked where they are. 13. Hide them in the dust together; shroud their faces in darkness! 14. Then will I confess to thy praise that thine own right arm will bring thee salvation.

15. Behold now behemoth [the river-ox] whom I made together with thee; he eats grass as the herds. 16. Behold now, his strength is in his loins, and his force in the sinews of his belly. 17. He bends his tail as a cedar; the muscles of his thighs interlace together. 18. His bones are tubes of brass; his bones are as forged bars of iron. 19. He is chief of the ways of God; his Maker gave him his sword. 20. For the mountains supply to him their products, and all the beasts of the field play there. 21. He lies down under the lotus leaves, in the covert of reeds and rushes. 22. The lotus leaves cover him with their shade; the willows of the brook are twined about him. 23. Lo a great river may rush down proudly upon him; he will not tremble; he will be fearless though Jordan burst forth at his very mouth. 24. Before his eyes, he [the hunter] will take him; he will pierce through his nose with hooks.



CHAPTER XLI.

The speech of the Lord continues.

1. But canst thou draw out leviathan with a hook? Canst thou press down his tongue with a cord? 2. Canst thou put a rush-cord in his nostrils and bore his jaw with a hook? 3. Will he make many supplications to thee and speak to thee with soft words? 4. Will he make a covenant with thee, and wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? 5. Wilt thou play with him as with the little birds and bind him for thy

maidens? 6. Shall hunting parties dig a pit for him and then divide him among the merchants? 7. Wilt thou fill his skin with javelins and his head with fish-spears? 8. Put thine hand upon him; remember the battle; try it not again!

9. Lo, the hope of taking him will prove vain; shall not one be cast down at even the sight of him? 10. There is not a man so daring as to rouse him up. Who then shall take his stand against me?

11. Who has first given ought to me that I should be holden to repay him? Under the whole heaven it [all] is mine.

12. I will not pass in silence his limbs, his renowned strength; the beauty of his attire. 13. Who has taken off his outer covering [of scales]? Who has entered within his double jaws? 14. Who shall open the doors of his mouth? His teeth round about are terrible. 15. His strong shields are a splendor, shut together with a close seal. 16. Each to each is so near that a breath of air can not pass between. 17. Each one cleaves fast to his brother; they clasp each other and will not be sundered. 18. With his sneezings, light streams forth, and his eyes are as the eyelids of the morning. 19. Burning lamps seem to walk forth from his mouth; sparks of fire make their escape. 20. From his nostrils there goeth smoke as from a pot or caldron over a blown fire. 21. His breath kindles coals; a flame goes forth from his mouth. 22. In his neck abides strength; terror dances with fear before him. 23. Even the hanging flaps of his flesh cleave close together; firm are they upon him and will not be moved. 24. His heart is firm as a stone; yea, firm as the nether mill-stone. 25. When he arouses himself, mighty men are afraid; terror-stricken, they lose their way in flight. 26. The sword that assails him shall not stand, nor the spear, the dart, or the coat of mail. 27. He accounts iron as straw and brass as rotten wood. 28. No arrows shall make him flee; for him, sling-stones turn to stubble. 29. The bludgeon he thinks of as straw; he laughs at the shaking of the spear. 30. Under him are sharp points as of potsherd; like a threshing-sledge they spread their traces on the mire. 31. He makes the great deep boil like a pot; he makes the sea as a pot of ointment. 32. He leaves a glistening path behind him; one might think the deep were hoary. 33. Upon the earth there is none like him—made to have no fear. 34. He looks down upon all the lofty; he is king over all the sons of pride.

CHAPTER XLII.

The conclusion.

1. Then Job answered the Lord and said, 2. I know thou hast all power and no purpose of thine can be hindered. 3. Who is this that darkens counsel with his folly? for I have set forth things I understood not—things too wonderful for me, and I could not know them. 4. Hear, I pray thee, and let me speak; I will ask of thee, and teach thou me. 5. I have heard about thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; 6. Therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.

7. Now after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite;—My wrath is kindled against thee and against thy two friends, because ye have not spoken concerning me the right thing, as my servant Job has. 8. Therefore take ye now for yourselves seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer a burnt-offering in your own behalf, and my servant Job will pray for you, for him will I accept, lest I deal with you according to your folly; for ye have not spoken concerning me the right thing, as my servant Job has.

9. Then Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the Lord had said to them, and the Lord accepted Job. 10. Then the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the Lord gave Job twice as much of all as he had before. 11. Then there came to him all his brethren and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house, and they bemoaned and comforted him on account of all the afflictions which the Lord had brought upon him; and they each gave him one kesita, and each an ear-ring of gold.

12. And the Lord blessed the latter years of Job more than the earlier; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand she-asses. 13. He had also seven sons and three daughters. 14. He called the name of the first Jemima; the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Keren-happuch. 15. And no women were found in all the

land so fair as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. 16. After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his sons and his sons' sons, four generations. 17. Then Job died, being old and full of days.

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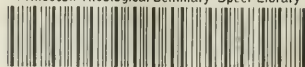
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